

Causeway Coast & Glens

Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy & Resources Committee

Date: 18th August 2015

Correspondence report

Copy of Correspondence available upon request

1. Appointment of Diversity Champions

In 2011, the Local Government Staff Commission established a single Equality and Diversity Group which encompassed all the equality and diversity work in Councils, including Section 75 statutory duties. Members were previously invited via a letter from the Staff Commission to nominate a Diversity Champion to participate in this Group but this nomination has not yet been finalised.

Council were also invited in this correspondence to formally endorse an Equality and Diversity Framework document designed to assist councils in meeting their equality and diversity obligations and to demonstrate their compliance with them.

Members are asked to consider the endorsement of the attached Equality and Diversity Framework document and also the possible nomination of a Councillor as a Diversity Champion.

2. Ministerial Advisory Group Placemaking Symposium (NILGA – Shaping Place Changing Lives)

A free one day Placemaking Symposium for Elected Members and Officials, to be held at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey on Thursday 22 October 2015 at 9.30am-3.00pm.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Democratic Services.

3. National Pay Consultation with NJC Employers Side - Northern Ireland Member Councils

NILGA has co-ordinated a consultative session with the Local Government Association Workforce Team (the local government national employer body) to enable you to meet as Councillors and senior council officers on the Trade Unions Side pay claim for the year commencing 1st April 2016.

This pay consultation will take place on **Monday 21st September 2015** starting at **11.30am**. The venue is the Steeple Suite, Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Stiles Way, Antrim, BT41 2UB. Tea/Coffee will be available from 11.00am and a light lunch will be provided after the event.

Three representatives are invited to include at least one Officer.



Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils

29 April 2015

Dear Colleague

Appointment of Diversity Champions

In 2011, the Commission established a single Equality and Diversity Group which encompasses all the equality and diversity work in councils, including Section 75 statutory duties.

One of the key elements of this initiative has been the appointment of a network of Diversity Champions to actively promote the equality and diversity agenda in councils. The Commission has encouraged all councils to commit to the initiative and to appoint both an officer and an elected member to act as Diversity Champions. A role specification for the Diversity Champions is enclosed for information.

We are now inviting the 11 new Councils to participate in this initiative so I would ask you to confirm which officer(s) and elected member(s) will act as Champions for your Council. We are planning a programme of events for Diversity Champions so I would be grateful if you would advise diana.stewart@lgsc.org.uk of the names (and contact details) of your Champions by 22 May 2015 so we can invite them to these events.

Equality and Diversity Framework

The enclosed Equality and Diversity Framework was drafted and launched by the Equality and Diversity Group in 2013, and endorsed by the former 26 councils. I would now seek your co-operation by including the Framework on the agenda of an appropriate meeting in order to have the document formally endorsed by your Council.

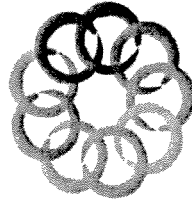
If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lorna Parsons or myself at Commission House.

Yours faithfully

ADRIAN E KERR
Chief Executive

The Local Government Staff Commission for NI, Commission House, 18-22 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG

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Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils

(INSERT NAME) COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

This Framework details the Council's statement of intent and approach to ensure equality and diversity

Context

Councils are required to comply with anti-discrimination legislation and Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 (the Act). Section 75 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.

This Framework is designed to assist councils to meet their equality and diversity obligations and to demonstrate their compliance with them.

The Framework covers everyone who uses the Council's services, our facilities and accesses our information, including:

- Customers of the Council
- Members of the Public
- Partners and Other Stakeholders
- Contractors who deliver services on behalf of the Council
- Council Elected Members
- Council Employees
- Trade Unions
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Business Sector
- Other Public Sector Bodies

In order to assist with the implementation of this Framework the Council has appointed a Councillor and Officer to **champion** equality and diversity across the Council by driving positive actions and acting as a contact point for issues relating to this equality and diversity framework.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FRAMEWORK

Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non-discriminatory environment, promote equality, and model best practice in equality and good relations

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- Treat everyone equally and with dignity and respect
- Think about how our actions affect others
- Help people change for the better through example by challenging unacceptable behaviour or language
- Be knowledgeable by taking personal responsibility for training around equality and diversity and good relations (mandatory training for all Council staff and managers is in place)

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance:

NI Code of Local Government Conduct, Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees, (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards, etc*)

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations

We will:

- Ensure that all policies, projects and programmes of work are screened and, where appropriate, impact assessed
- Publish all screening outcomes including any mitigation or alternative policies considered
- Involve the customers of the council, trade unions, business sector and voluntary and community sector on an on-going basis to assist us in the review and development of existing and new policies

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance:

Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan, Progress Reports, Screening Reports

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information

We will take steps to improve access to services, facilities and information and be open about what we can and cannot do:

We will:

- Involve customers and stakeholders in the design, prioritisation and review of services
- Monitor and review services regularly to identify any under-representation or discrimination
- Make sure information is accessible using Plain English and other accessibility standards
- Provide alternative formats, translations and interpreters when needed
- Make sure buildings are accessible and welcoming to all
- Make sure meetings and events are easy to access

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan, Translation and Interpretation Policy, Good Relations Strategy, (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards, etc*)

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly

The Council will make sure that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment.

We will:

- Use non-discriminatory job criteria
- Take positive action to ensure a diverse workforce
- Apply fair selection procedures
- Monitor and review employment practice
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Support staff through appropriate networks

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, Local Government Competency Framework Staff Handbook, Welcoming Statement

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and pro-active way

Everyone has the right to complain about discrimination and harassment in good faith, without being victimised at any time.

We will:

- Handle complaints and grievances properly
- Resolve matters positively
- Respond to incidents of prejudice or hate crime

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Complaints Policy and Procedure, Grievance Procedure, NI Code of Local Government Conduct, Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards etc*)

MONITORING

The Council will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Framework and will engage with Councillors, employees and the trade unions regarding any proposed changes to policies or practices.

SIGNED: _____

COUNCIL MAYOR/CHAIR

COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE:

**Diversity Champion
Role Specification
(Officer and Elected Member)**

The Diversity Champion works closely with other colleagues at a number of different levels within the organisation.

Responsibilities will include:

1. To champion equality and diversity across the Council.
2. To display real interest and a desire to be kept apprised of developments in equality and diversity.
3. Attend and speak at key events in the Council.
4. Challenge other senior staff and elected members to promote the values of the equality and diversity.
5. Act as a focus in the Council for:
 - engagement with staff
 - sharing best practice on equality and diversity
 - driving positive actions
 - developing networks.
6. Promote the Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan.
7. Attend development events organised for Diversity Champions to become further familiarised with the role of the Diversity Champion.
8. Regular meetings with the other Diversity Champions to:
 - help mentor new Champions
 - share good practice
 - contribute to a steering group
 - develop case studies of good practice as appropriate.
9. Understand and effectively represent priorities for the local government sector in terms of equality and diversity.
10. Record and report back on issues and concerns to the Champions' Network to help inform future progress and development.
11. Acting as the first point of contact for enquiries and providing advice, guidance and support within the organisation.
12. Ensure articles are placed in newsletters/briefings.