

**Committee:** Council

**Date:** 12 May 2008

**Title:** The Council's Gender Equality Scheme

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**Agenda Item**

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Item for Decision

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### Summary

- 1 The attached Uttlesford District Council (UDC) statutory Gender Equality Scheme which has recently undergone internal consultation and a draft copy was put on the UDC website for public consultation. The document will be continually under review and revision, to reflect feedback and ongoing update.
- 2 The purpose of this Report is to introduce the new Uttlesford District Council Gender Equality Scheme, in the context of the wider equalities framework
- 3 The Scheme has been presented for approval at this stage in order to speed up the Council's ability to achieve The Equality Standard Level 2.

### Recommendations

- 4 That Members adopt the Uttlesford District Council Gender Equality scheme.

### Background Papers

- 5 The Gender Equality Duty April 2007
- 6 Uttlesford District Council Equalities and Inclusion Policy (see separate document)
- 7 Uttlesford District Council, Report of Progress against The Equality Standard for Local Government, March 2007, DIALOG Consultant's Report (see separate document)
- 8 Uttlesford District Council Race Equality and the Disability Equality Schemes, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/job+vacancies/equalities.htm>

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	A consultation exercise internally and externally has been completed. The internal consultation period was from 4/1/08 – 15/2/08. The draft document was on the website from external consultation from 27/3/08 – 9/5/08.
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Community Safety	Community Safety Officer has been consulted on the contents of the Gender Equality Scheme.
Equalities	Positive effect on equalities; HR involved.
Finance	Resources will be required for training across the organisation. A limited budget was allocated for 2007-8. There is no budget for further years, in terms of cost of consultation and resource implications.
Human Rights	Human Rights will be enhanced as a result of the this proposal
Legal implications	All relevant legislation has been considered and acted upon.
Sustainability	No impact on sustainable issues relating to either the council or the community.
Ward-specific impacts	No specific wards have been identified in relation to this Report
Workforce/Workplace	There will be a high level of impact on the workforce, who will require training and awareness of all related issues. Unison is involved at all stages of the proceedings.

## Situation

9 The Gender Equality Scheme has been produced in response to the Equality Act 2006, which amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This placed a new enforceable legal duty on all public authorities when carrying out all its functions (including policy making, service provision, employment matters, and statutory discretion as well as decision making) to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The duty has recently extended to cover discrimination against people who are undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment.

10 The duty is made up of two elements the General Duty and the Specific Duties.

- The General Duty is the overall duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality. This came into force on 6 April 2007.
- The Specific Duties are a means of meeting the General Duty. Under this duty we must prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, address

causes of the gender pay gap, consult stakeholders, implement and report against the scheme yearly as a method of review. The Gender Equality Scheme must be published by 30 April 2007.

- 11 Internal and external consultation for the Gender Equality Scheme has recently closed. All comments have been assessed and some amendments were made in light of the responses.
- 12 The Gender Equality Duty will be enforced by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).
- 13 This scheme is related to the UDC Equalities and Inclusion Policy and will be incorporated as one of the six strands of Equality issues.

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
UDC not meeting our Equalities Standard if UDC does not adopt an Equalities and Inclusion Policy.	Low, 1 as there is corporate commitment to achieving the standard.	High criticism from external auditors and reputational damage.	Ensure sufficient resources are available to ensure necessary work to be carried out.
UDC not publishing Gender Equality Scheme by 30 April 2007	Low, 1 now that consultation period has ended there is no obstacle to publication once the scheme has been adopted by Members.	High 3, criticism from external auditors and reputational damage.  Potential CEHR compliance notice issued which are enforceable in the courts.	Ensure sufficient resources are available to ensure necessary work to be carried out.