



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

EQUALITIES SCHEME 2010

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Board”) has been established since 1996 and discharges jointly the responsibilities which North, South and East Ayrshire Councils hold as Valuation Authorities.

The members of the Board comprise 16 elected councillors who are appointed by the constituent authorities as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| East Ayrshire Council | 5 members |
| North Ayrshire Council | 6 members |
| South Ayrshire Council | 5 members |

The Board has appointed an Assessor who is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List, which are the base documents required for the three Ayrshire Councils to ingather Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.

The three Councils have also appointed Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board to discharge jointly their functions with regard to Electoral Registration. The Board has therefore appointed the Assessor to be the Electoral Registration Officer and be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Register of Electors, which is essential for all European, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer currently has a full time equivalent staff of 46 persons to assist in carrying out these Statutory Functions. In view of the relatively small size of the organisation the Board has adopted South Ayrshire Council as a lead authority. That is to say that support is provided to the Board in the areas of Human Resources, Financial Management, Procurement, Facilities Management and Communications & Information Technology by South Ayrshire Council.

1.2 The Service Mission, Aims and Objectives of the Board

The Service Mission of the Board is “*to provide equitable, customer focussed, best value, high quality, professional valuation and electoral services for all its stakeholders*”.

The aims and objectives of the Board are to:

- Ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with all statutory requirements.
- Plan service development and delivery in accordance with the principles of Best Value and continuous improvement.
- Consult our stakeholders about their needs and expectations.
- Recognise our employees as both stakeholders and our most important asset.
- Take individual and collective responsibility for the services provided by AVJB.

- Encourage innovation and recognise achievement within the organisation.
- Monitor and report performance levels to stakeholders.
- Integrate equalities issues into all aspects of our service provision.
- Build upon our achievements to date.

1.3 The Scope of the Board's Functions

The functions of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board are of a limited nature. They are also heavily prescribed by legislation.

With regard to Council Tax the Assessor's staff inspect and survey each new domestic property as required in order to assess the appropriate valuation band at which it should be entered on the Valuation List. Once the appropriate band is determined the details are passed to the relevant Council in order that the Council may levy Council Tax.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Council Tax is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the valuation band determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the valuation band.

With regard to Non Domestic Rates, the Assessor's staff inspect and survey new or altered properties as required in order to assess the rateable value which should be entered in the Valuation Roll. The Assessor's staff will also re-assess the rateable value of every non-domestic property as part of each general revaluation, which takes place every 5 years. Once determined the details of new and revised rateable values are passed to the relevant Council in order that the non-domestic rates may be levied.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Non Domestic Rates is generally in order to make an appointment to inspect a property, to issue a Valuation Notice giving details of the rateable value determined and to deal with appeals and enquiries which relate to the rateable value.

With regard to Electoral Registration, the Assessor's staff undertake a canvass by issuing a canvass form by post to each household annually. In conjunction with other forms of checks a number of door to door enquiries will also be undertaken to supplement this information. The information gathered will be used to compile the Electoral Register. In addition to the annual canvass, individuals who are qualified to do so may apply to be added to the Electoral Register throughout the year.

Therefore, the Assessor's engagement with members of the public for Electoral Registration is generally to issue canvass forms and gather the information returned, together with dealing with general enquiries and applications to be added to the Electoral Register.

2.0 The Equality Duties

2.1 Race Equality

The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) and supporting regulations place both a general duty and a specific duty upon the Board.

2.1.1 The General Duty

The general duty requires the Board to actively promote racial equality. This means that the Board has a general duty, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

2.1.2 The Specific Duty

In addition to the general duty, the Board has a specific duty to publish a Race Equality Scheme, which must show how it intends to fulfil the general duty and include a statement of:

- Those of its functions and policies which it has assessed as relevant to its performance of its duty.
- Its arrangements for-
 - Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its policies on the promotion of race equality.
 - Monitoring its policies for any adverse effect on the promotion of race equality.
 - Publishing the results of such assessments and consultation.
 - Ensuring public access to information and services it provides.
 - Training staff in connection with the race relations duties.

The Board must also monitor the number of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion from each racial group.

The Board is required to review its Race Equality Scheme at three yearly intervals.

2.2 Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (as amended) and supporting regulations place both a general duty and a specific duty upon the Board.

2.2.1 The General Duty

The general duty requires the Board to actively promote disabled equality. This means that the Board has a general duty, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

2.2.2 The Specific Duty

In addition to the general duty, the Board has a specific duty to publish this Disability Equality Scheme, which must show how it intends to fulfil the general duty and include a statement of:

- The ways in which disabled persons have been involved with the development of the scheme.
- The methods for assessing the impact or the likely impact of its policies and practices on equality for disabled persons.
- An action plan outlining the steps which the Board will take towards fulfilling its general duty.
- The arrangements for gathering information relating to employment and the delivery of its functions.
- The arrangements for making use of such information, for reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan on a regular basis and for preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes.

The Board must publish an annual report summarising the steps that it has taken to fulfil its disability equality duty, the results of the information gathering which has been carried out and the actions it has taken as a result of that information. In addition the Board must review the Disability Equality Scheme at three yearly intervals.

2.3 Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Act 2006 significantly amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and, together with the supporting regulations, these place both a general duty and a specific duty upon the Board.

2.3.1 The General Duty

The general duty requires the Board to actively promote gender equality. This means that the Board has a general duty, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

2.3.2 The Specific Duty

In addition to the general duty, the Board has a specific duty to prepare and to publish a Gender Equality Scheme, which must show how it intends to fulfil the general duty and set out:-

- The overall objectives which the Board has identified as necessary to perform the general duty.
- The actions which the Board has taken or intends to take to;
 - Gather information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and on women and, in particular, the extent to which they promote equality between male and female staff and the extent to which the services it provides and the functions it performs take account of the needs of men and women.
 - Make use of such information to assist in the performance of the general duty and to regularly review the effectiveness of the actions identified and its arrangements for the preparation of subsequent schemes.
 - Assess the impact of its policies and practices on equality between men and women and to have due regard to the results of such assessments of impact.
 - Consult relevant staff, service users and others.
 - Achieve fulfilment of the objectives.

The Board must also publish an annual report summarising the steps that it has taken to fulfil its gender equality duty. In addition the Board must review the Scheme and publish a revised Scheme no later than three years after the publication of this Scheme and continue to review and publish a new Scheme at intervals of no greater than 3 years.

2.4 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and amends the above legislation and extends it to cover additional areas of equality. The Act will come into effect in stages with the first being effective from 1 October 2010.

The principal aim of the Act is to replace the above protection for race, disability and gender equality with nine “protected characteristics” which include, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Under the Act it is an offence to directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise a person because they have one or more protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Public Authorities, including the Board must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act also introduces an additional public sector duty. This requires the Board, in common with other public authorities, to have due regard to the need to exercise its functions in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Act makes provisions for the Scottish Government to impose specific duties on public authorities including the Board. At the current time the Scottish Government is consulting upon the nature of these specific duties.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 Consultation

The Board is a very small organisation with limited functions and has recognised that it does not have the resources to undertake detailed consultations directly with the various racial, disability and gender groups to which its statutory duties extend. The Board has sought to liaise indirectly with these groups through its constituent Councils and the Ayrshire Equalities Partnership. Information has been provided to the Board of consultation exercises undertaken by the constituent Councils. In particular the Board’s lead authority, South Ayrshire Council, has devoted resources to supporting the Board in achieving its equality duties and has shared the outcome of its consultations. The Board gratefully acknowledges this assistance from South Ayrshire Council.

The Ayrshire Equalities Partnership Group meets at quarterly intervals for the express purpose of discussing equality issues. There is representation on the Group from South Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire Sikh Association, and Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Community Association. The Partnership provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss various approaches to equality issues and it is anticipated that in future it will provide a platform by which collaborative actions and consultations can be undertaken.

3.2 Outcome of Consultation

The outcome of these various consultations has led the Board to focus its attention on the following specific areas of equality:

- 1 Staffing matters including internal policies and procedures.
- 2 Recruitment and selection.
- 3 Exercising our functions.
- 4 Information gathering and monitoring.
- 5 Training.

4.0 Specific Areas of Equality

4.1 Staffing matters including equal pay and internal policies and procedures

In July 2010 the Board implemented the national single status agreement for Local Authority Employees in Scotland. In accordance with this agreement all jobs have been re-evaluated to ensure that there is no gender bias. The re-evaluation was undertaken using the COSLA job evaluation model and, prior to implementation, an independent consultant was engaged to undertake an equality impact assessment of the outcomes. Following detailed analysis the consultant confirmed that the proposed outcomes were technically robust and non-discriminatory and suitable for implementation by the Board.

In conjunction with re-evaluating all posts the Board has introduced a revised pay structure and package of terms and conditions of employment. Again the pay structure and package of terms and conditions have been endorsed by the consultant as non-discriminatory in terms of their proposed application.

An integral element of the revised pay structure and package of the terms and conditions is a range of policies which are aimed at, amongst other things, eliminating discrimination and promoting an appropriate work life balance. The Board largely adopts policies and procedures in line with those developed by South Ayrshire Council. Currently the Board has a range of policies and procedures in place and these are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Having reviewed the pay structure, the terms and conditions and the various policies and procedures currently in place, the Board is satisfied that these are non-discriminatory and meet the Board's equality duties. However, the Board also recognises that it is important to continue to monitor these provisions and, in conjunction with South Ayrshire Council, will continue to update these and develop new policies as required. Any new policies or amendments to existing policies will be impact assessed by South Ayrshire Council before implementation. Arrangements will be made to establish a structure for regular meetings with representatives from South Ayrshire Council to discuss these issues and this is included in our Action Plan. See **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Recruitment and Selection

The Board operates a policy to ensure that recruitment and selection is undertaken within a framework which is fair, consistent, avoids discriminatory practices and provides equal access to all jobs. The policy incorporates a recruitment charter and also includes a commitment that any disabled applicant who satisfies the minimum requirements will be invited for interview. Prior to interview an access to interview form is issued to all shortlisted candidates to ensure that adequate provisions can be made for them to attend.

In conjunction with this policy, provision has been made to monitor the racial, gender, disability and marital status of both successful and unsuccessful applicants. This information is not available to the interview panel.

4.3 Exercising our Functions

In examining the way in which it carries out its functions the Board has recognised that these functions are restricted in nature and heavily prescribed by Statute.

The principal functions of the Board in relation to Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates may, at one level, be said to be equality neutral as they are concerned with assessing property for the purpose of taxation. It is the property that requires to be assessed rather than the individual who may be occupying that particular property. Invariably the Board's staff will inspect and measure the premises and normally there will no need for any assistance from the occupier save for providing access. The Assessor is provided with statutory authority to enable him to gain access to each property for this purpose.

Similarly with regard to Electoral Registration, the legislation requires that each qualifying adult resident in the area must be registered to vote. The requirement applies to all qualifying individuals regardless of race, gender, disability, etc. The Electoral Registration Officer is subject to a specific legislative duty to take steps to ensure that all voters are included and the Electoral Commission measures the performance of each ERO in this area.

Notwithstanding the above the Board has identified the following as being the principal areas of concern to equality groups:

1 Equality of treatment:

Equality of treatment is a fundamental right and the Assessor and ERO has taken steps to ensure that a culture of equality is embedded in the organisation. A top down approach has been adopted and equality is a standing item on the agenda for discussion at our monthly management meetings. An equality group has been established which meets to consider equality issues and how these can best be addressed in undertaking our statutory functions. Training has been provided to all staff to reinforce their understanding of equality issues and duties.

The Board has identified that further training may be required to deal with additional equality duties provided for by the Equality Act 2010. See **Appendix 2**.

2 Access to the Board's premises:

An assessment has been made of the suitability of the Board's premises for access by disabled people. It has been recognised that the original part of the building, being a traditional Georgian town house with a series of steps at the entrance, presents problems for disabled users. The internal stairs and broken layout of the interior of this part of the building does not lend itself to use by disabled persons e.g. to wheelchair use.

The modern extension to the rear of the building is accessed from pavement level and its open plan layout does lend itself to use by disabled persons. Prominent signage at the front of the building directs wheelchair users to the rear of the building where a parking space has been reserved for disabled clients and an access door, reception area and toilet suitable for disabled use has been provided.

3 Access to information published by the Board:

The Board creates a number of publications which are available in hard copy. Facilities are available, through South Ayrshire Council, whereby these publications can be made available in different languages, in Braille or on audio tape on request.

The Board also publishes information on its website. Following a recent review the website has been upgraded to include the facility to increase font size and also includes a speech enabled facility.

4 Communication with the Board:

The Board has established, through our lead authority that, other than English, the next most common languages spoken in Ayrshire are Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, Polish and Punjabi. The Board issues forms and notices in connection with Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Electoral Registration. The annual Electoral Registration Canvass Form and Revaluation and Valuation Notices now incorporate details in each of the above languages which advise recipients on how to proceed if further information on the content of the form is required.

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board staff now have access to the translation facilities provided through "Language Line". This is a telephone system, which can be accessed by staff who encounter members of the public whose first language is not English. All appropriate staff have received training in the use of language line.

The use of a sign language interpreter is also available through South Ayrshire Council and recently an electronic hearing loop has been provided within the main reception area. This facility enables electronic signals to be connected directly to the hearing aid of deaf or hard of hearing customers. This hearing loop is portable and may be taken to other locations within the office if required.

A review has been undertaken of the size and type of font in which letters and other correspondence are issued by the Board. In line with recommendations, wherever possible correspondence is provided in Arial font size 12 to the benefit of partially sighted clients.

5 Appeals and complaints to the Board:

The Board has in place provisions whereby our clients may complain about the organisation and a form is available for this purpose. The Board also issues customer feedback survey forms which request users of the service to comment upon aspects of the service they have received. Each of these forms now includes details of the gender, disability, racial and ethnic origin of the customer. Complaints and customer feedback are considered to determine whether they identify any equality issues that should be addressed.

In addition to the above the Board has identified that, notwithstanding the various initiatives already undertaken, there may be merit in reviewing best practice among our colleague EROs in relation to Electoral Registration. It is intended that colleague EROs be approached to identify steps which they take to engage with racial and disability groups to encourage them to register and this is included within our Action Plan. See **Appendix 2**.

4.4 Information Gathering & Monitoring

The Board has put in place procedures to gather information concerning equality issues which may arise in the conduct of its business. These include:

1 Flexible/Part Time Working, Maternity and Paternity Leave:

The Board monitors the incidence of staff taking up the opportunity for flexible/part time working, maternity and paternity leave. The Board also monitors the incidence of mothers returning to work after maternity leave.

2 Provision of Training:

The Board monitors the extent to which training is delivered to employees including, where training requests are submitted by employees, whether such requests are approved by management in order to identify any equality issues that may arise.

3 Employee Opinion Survey:

A survey of employee opinions is undertaken each year. This takes the form of a questionnaire which employees are invited to complete and return anonymously. In the course of this survey employees are able to express their experiences with regard to, among other things, discrimination and equality issues and their views upon the way in which these issues are dealt with by management. The results of the questionnaire are analysed and considered by management.

4 Employee Interviews:

In addition to the employee opinion survey a series of confidential employee interviews are conducted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. Approximately 20% of employees are interviewed and are drawn from all sections of the organisation. All employees are given the opportunity to express their experiences with regard to, among other things, discrimination and equality issues and their views upon the way in which these issues are dealt with by management. Whilst the confidentiality of individual interviews is preserved a report summarising, in general terms, the feedback is prepared by the Assessor and considered by management.

5 Equalities Monitoring:

The Board monitors the breakdown of employees by gender, race and disability both by grade and work group. It also monitors the gender, race and disability details of both internal and external applicants for employment/promotion and the incidence of staff leaving the employment of the Board. These details are included within the Board's Equality Monitoring Statement. See **Appendix 4**.

6 Use of language line and other facilities:

The Board monitors the use of language line and other translation services, the disabled access and the hearing loop.

4.5 Training

Training has recently been provided to all AVJB staff in "Respect at Work" this course highlighted the equality standards expected of staff in their treatment of both colleagues and the Board's clients and stakeholders.

It is intended that further training will be delivered to all staff once the new specific duties provided for by the Equality Act 2010 have been determined and this has been included in our Action Plan. See **Appendix 2**.

5.0 Impact Assessment

The Board adopts, wherever possible, the policies, practices and procedures of its lead authority, South Ayrshire Council. This includes, among others, policies concerning; Equalities, Recruitment and Selection, Respect at Work, Harassment and Bullying and Training and Development. The Board has also adopted South Ayrshire Council's procedures for Exit Interviews and Performance Review and Development.

The impact that the policies and procedures the Board has adopted from South Ayrshire Council have upon equality groups will be assessed by South Ayrshire Council. Any changes arising from such impact assessment will be reflected by updating the Board's policies, practices and procedures in line with those of South Ayrshire Council.

The Board's management team will review the impact on equality groups of the practices and procedures followed in the exercise of its statutory functions which do not directly follow those of South Ayrshire Council at regular management meetings. Where the impacts arising from these practices and procedures are considered to be of high relevance a full impact analysis will be carried out in accordance with South Ayrshire Council's guidance. A copy of South Ayrshire Council's Guidance for Impact Assessment is attached at **Appendix 3**.

6.0 The Action Plan

In order to achieve objectives set out above, the Board has created an Action Plan. This is attached as **Appendix 2**.

7.0 Publicity

This Scheme will be published and circulated to all employees of the Board. Copies will be available from the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer at 9 Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1HL. The Scheme will also be placed on the Board's website at www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk and the Scottish Assessors' Association website at www.saa.gov.uk. Translation will be made available on request using the services of "Language Line" or other translation services.

8.0 Duration and Review

This Scheme is intended to cover the period October 2010 to September 2013 and will be subject to review at the end of that period. However, the Board may require to revisit the Scheme once the Scottish Government has determined the new specific duties to be undertaken by public authorities.

AVJB Policies and Procedures

The Board has a range of policies and procedures in place, many of which are aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. The Board's policies and procedures are detailed below:

Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
Adoption Leave Requests
Alcohol and Substance Abuse
Anti Fraud and Corruption
Attendance at Work
Attendance During Adverse Weather Conditions
Breaks at Work
Childcare Voucher Scheme
Code of Conduct for Employees
Computer Use
Concerns at Work (Whistle Blowing)
Customer Comments and Complaints Procedure
Disciplinary Procedures
Email (use of)
Enhanced Leave Scheme
Exit Interviews
Flexible Retirement
Flexible Working
Flexi-Time Scheme
Gambling Addiction
Grievances
Health & Safety
ICT Acceptable Use Policy
Internet (Rules for Use)
Job Sharing
Local Government Pension Scheme & Management of Early Retirement
Managing Absence and Improving Attendance
Managing Workforce Change
Maternity Leave Requests
Maternity Support & Paternity Leave Requests
Monitoring Attendance at Work
Occupational Health Guidelines
Parental Leave Requests
Recruitment and selection
Respect at Work, Harassment and Bullying
Special Leave
Stress
Temporary & Casual Working
Training and Development
Transmittable Diseases Code of Practice
Travel and Subsistence
Working Alone out with the Office
Working beyond 65
Working Time Regulations

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board Equality Scheme Action Plan

| Action No. | Task | Start Date | End Date | Owner | Status |
|------------|--|------------|----------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.0 | Arrange for regular meetings with SAC HR to discuss pay structures, terms and conditions and policies and procedures. | Oct 2010 | Nov 2010 | Depute Assessor | Complete |
| 2.0 | Provide training to update all staff on new equality duties and responsibilities as detailed in the Equality Act 2010: | Jan 2011 | Dec 2011 | Depute Assessor | |
| 3.0 | Review best practice among colleague EROs with regard to maximising Electoral Registration for racial, disability and other equality groups. | Jan 2011 | Dec 2011 | Principal Admin. Officer | |
| 4.0 | Review the Action Plan and prepare an Equality Monitoring Statement annually. | Feb/March | N/A | Depute Assessor | |



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Guidance and Checklist

2006

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2006

Section One: Policy Details*

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Name of Policy | |
| Lead Officer (Name/Position) | |
| Review Team (Names/Positions) | |

*Policy could include strategy, project or application: see guidance below.

| | |
|---|--|
| What are the main aims of the policy? | |
| What are the intended outcomes of the policy | |

Section Two: What are the Likely Impacts of the Policy?

| | |
|---|--|
| Will the policy impact upon the whole population of south Ayrshire <i>or</i> particular groups within the population (please specify) | |
|---|--|

Considering the following Protected Characteristics, what likely impacts or issues does the policy have for the group. List any likely positive or negative impacts:

| | |
|--|--|
| Race: Issues relating to ethnic minorities, including gypsy travellers and migrant workers | |
| Gender: Issues specific to women or men | |
| Disability: Issues relating to disabled people | |
| Age: Issues relating to older people or children and young people | |
| Religion or Belief: issues relating to a persons religion or belief (including non-belief) | |
| Sexual Orientation: Issues relating to a persons sexual orientation e.g. lesbian, gay , bi-sexual, heterosexual, transgender | |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership: Issues relating to people who are married or are in a civil partnership. | |
| Other groups (please specify) | |

Section Three: Evidence Used in Developing the Policy

| | |
|--|--|
| In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from involvement, engagement or consultation? <i>Who</i> did you involve, <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> ? | |
| In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from research or other data. Please specify <i>what</i> research was carried out or data collected, <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> this was done. | |
| Have you identified any gaps or uncertainties in our understanding of the issues or impacts that need to be explored further? | |

On the basis of the above assessment should the policy go ahead or is further work needed first?

Yes policy should go ahead
 No policy should be subjected to more development work

Any comments?

Section Four: Performance monitoring and reporting

Considering the policy as a whole, including its equality and diversity implications:

| | |
|--|--|
| When will the policy come into effect? | |
| How long will the policy have effect? | |
| When will the policy be reviewed? | |
| Which committee will have oversight of the policy? | |
| Will any additional staff training be required to put the policy into effect? (please specify) | |
| Impact assessment agreed on (date) | |
| Content agreed by Head of Service (Name/position) | |

South Ayrshire Council
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Guidance

What is Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (IA)?

IA is an open process by which the Council or any other public body can assess and demonstrate the likely impact of its policies, projects or procedures on different groups that make up the population of the area. It is an evidence based approach that can be used to help the Council meet its best value duties and its equality duties.

Why carry out impact assessment?

IA is now a statutory responsibility for public bodies. It was introduced by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; is required under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Gender and Age Equality legislation and regulations and now the Equality Act 2010 which received Royal Assent on the 8th April 2010. It To quote from the DDA

A public authority must include in its Disability Equality Scheme a statement of the authority's methods for assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality for disabled persons.

The Council therefore has to demonstrate that it has arrangements for IA in place and is putting them into effect. It is also a tool that can help the Council meet its best value objectives, not only in relation to equalities but also to support evidence based policy development.

What the impact assessment is designed to show?

IA is a self-assessment process that is carried out when developing or reviewing policies. The purpose is both to ensure that an authority's decisions and activities do not disadvantage any particular group within the population, and also to identify how they might promote equality of opportunity. It should therefore show the likely impact of any policy on different groups and the evidence used by the Council in making the assessment.

What should an IA contain?

A good IA should contain details of the:

- Aims and intended outcomes of the policy
- Likely impacts on different groups
- Evidence from consultation, research or other sources that was used in the assessment
- Any further engagement, consultation or research that is needed
- How the policy will be taken forward, managed and monitored.

Who should carry out an impact assessment?

Any officer developing a new policy should be aware of the duty and arrange to carry out an IA before the policy goes to committee. The procedure should not be onerous and, if the policy has been:

- well thought out in advance
- has clear aims and outcomes and is
- based on sound evidence,

then the IA should be completed quickly.

At the outset it is recommended that the IA checklist should be completed by at least two people – the main author of the policy and an external assessor from another service or department (or even from outside the Council) who is familiar with IA. This will help ensure a degree of scrutiny in the process.

When should IA be applied?

In theory all policies, strategies and procedures of the council should be impact assessed. The most practical approach is to assess new policies, strategies or other major developments as they are being developed or as they come up for review. The best approach is to consider the likely impacts of a new policy as it is being developed – make this part of the policy development process.

IA should certainly be applied as a priority:

- If you believe that the policy you are developing will have significant implications for people living in South Ayrshire and you need to spell out what those implications could be;
- If the policy is likely to have a particular impact on one or more groups living in South Ayrshire;
- If the policy has major strategic importance for a service or the Council
- If you believe that an existing procedure or practice might disadvantage some individuals or particular group.

There may be other cases where IA is necessary or could be helpful.

- Grant applications to the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland or other funding bodies may require IA to be carried out. A funding application will certainly be stronger if it can demonstrate that equalities implications have been taken into consideration; and IA is an effective way to demonstrate this.
- Project management may benefit from an IA, particularly if external funding is being sought.

IA Should be an Open Process

The process of IA should be open to scrutiny. Ideally, an IA is carried out early in the policy development process, and the results shared with stakeholders, both partner organisations and community groups involved in the development of the process, for their comment and possibly revision. This will help strengthen the policy making process.

The finalised IA statement should be made public, by presenting to the appropriate panel as part of a report, and thereafter publishing it on the Equality and Diversity section of the Council's website. To allow this to happen, a copy of the IA should be provided to the Strategic Office, who will ensure their consideration by the Member Officer Group on Equality and Diversity.

Helpful hint: The Scottish Executive is subject to the same requirement to publish Impact Assessments for its policies and strategies as the Council. If the policy you are developing relates to a Scottish Executive initiative, such as regeneration or community safety then it might be helpful to ask the Scottish Executive for a copy of the IA they have prepared on the initiative. The same applies to Communities Scotland or government agencies.

South Ayrshire Council
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Guidance

Completing The IA checklist

(The checklist is available as a word document so that individual boxes can be expanded as required.)

Section One: Policy Details

Name of policy: give the name of the policy, strategy, project, funding application or other initiative.

Lead officer: the lead officer should be the officer who is responsible for developing the policy. The Review Team should be the team carrying out the IA. This should include at least one person involved in developing the new policy and one person from another service or department who has *not* been involved in developing the policy. If wider expertise is needed it may be helpful to consider inviting one or two other others to join the assessment including representatives from outwith the Council if appropriate.

Aims and Outcomes: give a brief summary of the aims and expected outcomes of the policy. The aims and intended outcomes should include reference to other relevant documents such as the Departmental Service Plan, Council Business Plan, Community Plan, or Scottish Executive documents.

Section Two: What are the Likely Impacts of the Policy?

In this section the checklist should be used to identify the main impacts that the policy could have on different groups.

The first question asks whether the policy will affect the whole population of part of the population. (*The Council's Youth Strategy, for example, is aimed at primarily at young people*)

This section gives the opportunity to spell out any impacts or issues that the policy raises for specific groups. The groups listed relate to the new statutory requirements of equalities legislation: race, gender, disability, age. For each group identify any particular impact or issue that the policy has for the group. Impacts could be positive or negative. A new policy may set out to improve service provision for a particular group, but it might also have unintended consequences for other groups or it might face particular challenges in relation to a particular group. (*For example in the Youth strategy, under gender, it was identified that there is a low take up of sports opportunities among girls. The strategy has identified this an issue and will seek to address it.*)

Impact assessment is not a precise science and it will not be possible to identify all the possible consequences of a policy. Circulating the draft to stakeholders, both partners and community groups might help to identify unforeseen impacts.

There may be other people not listed in the checklist that are relevant and should be mentioned. For example policies may have particular implications for rural areas; if this is the case it would be worth identifying under 'other groups'.

Section Three: Evidence Used in Developing the Policy

Section three provides the opportunity for the respondent to set out the evidence on impacts that has been collected in the development of the policy.

First, in the development of the policy; who has been consulted or involved in its development? Both the relevant equalities legislation and the duty to achieve best value demand effective consultation and engagement. This question allows the policy maker to describe how this was achieved. *(The Youth Strategy for example has been developed in the context of involvement of young people over many years and makes a commitment to establish new structures to take forward this engagement. The recent development of rural service priority areas has involved consultation in particular localities on local priorities and needs.)*

Auditors will expect to see evidence of engagement with relevant groups where policies are targeted those groups. For example if a policy has been developed for a group of people with a particular disability, have people from that group been involved in its development?

Similarly this is an opportunity to set out the data or research that has been used, whether local or national, in the development of the policy. It may be worth mentioning any relevant government guidance that has influenced the development of the policy.

Gaps

Few policies are developed in the context of perfect information or understanding of an issue. The checklist offers an opportunity to mention these gaps and set out, if necessary, whether steps can be taken to remedy these and fill in any gaps. *(For example in the development of the Council's Race Equality Scheme 2005 it was clear that we did not have the ability to engage fully with small and dispersed populations in South Ayrshire. The RE scheme dealt with this by including a commitment to improve engagement in order to get better information and understanding of needs in the future.)*

Section Four Performance Monitoring and Reporting

This section allows the respondent to describe how the policy will be taken forward. This will act as a record for future reviews, monitoring, and for identifying any training requirements. Finally it is recommended that, when completed, the IA is signed off by the relevant Head of Service.

It is recommended that a copy of the completed IA is kept on an open file in a way that it easily accessible both to auditors and the public upon request. In addition, a copy of the completed assessment should be sent to Peter Linton, Performance and Change Manager, Chief Executive's Department (details below).

Comments on this policy

Equality and Diversity IA has been formally used in South Ayrshire Council since 2006. If you have any questions or comments please contact Peter Linton, Performance and Change Manager, Policy, Performance and Communication on 01292 612702 or at peter.linton@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Revised 26th April 2010

EQUALITIES MONITORING STATEMENT AS AT 31/12/2009**Breakdown of Employees by Ethnicity**

| White Scottish | White English | White Welsh | White Irish | White British | White Other | Asian or Asian British Other | Black or Black British Other | Other | Un-known | Not Recorded | Totals |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|----------|--------------|--------|
| 52 | | | | 2 | 0 | | | | | | 52 |

Breakdown of Employees By Gender

| Female | Male | TOTALS |
|--------|------|--------|
| 33 | 19 | 52 |

Breakdown of Employees By Disability

| Not Disabled | Disabled | Not Recorded | TOTALS |
|--------------|----------|--------------|--------|
| 52 | 0 | 0 | 52 |

Applicants for Employment/Promotion During 2009

| Applicants for Employment | | Total No:- 33 | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|--|
| Gender | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Male | 24 | 72.7 | |
| Female | 9 | 27.2 | |
| Ethnic Origin | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| White Scottish | 32 | 96.9 | |
| White English | | | |
| White Welsh | | | |
| White Irish | | | |
| Other White British | | | |
| Any Other White Background | | | |
| Any Mixed Background | | | |
| Indian | | | |
| Pakistani | | | |
| Bangladeshi | | | |
| Chinese | | | |
| Any other Asian Background | 1 | | |
| Caribbean | | | |
| African | | | |
| Any other Black Background | | | |
| Any Other Background | | | |
| Unknown | | | |
| Disability | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Disabled | 1 | 3.0 | |
| Not disabled | 32 | 96.9 | |
| Not Known | | | |

| Selected for Interview | | Total No:- 16 | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|--|
| Gender | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Male | 10 | 62.5 | |
| Female | 6 | 37.5 | |
| Ethnic Origin | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| White Scottish | 15 | 93.7 | |
| White English | | | |
| White Welsh | | | |
| White Irish | | | |
| Other White British | | | |
| Any Other White Background | | | |
| Any Mixed Background | | | |
| Indian | | | |
| Pakistani | | | |
| Bangladeshi | | | |
| Chinese | | | |
| Any other Asian Background | 1 | | |
| Caribbean | | | |
| African | | | |
| Any other Black Background | | | |
| Any Other Background | | | |
| Unknown | | | |
| Disability | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Disabled | 1 | 6.2 | |
| Not disabled | 15 | 93.7 | |
| Not Known | | | |

| Successful Appointments | | Total No:- 4 | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|--|
| Gender | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Male | 2 | 50 | |
| Female | 2 | 50 | |
| Ethnic Origin | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| White Scottish | 4 | 100 | |
| White English | | | |
| White Welsh | | | |
| White Irish | | | |
| Other White British | | | |
| Any Other White Background | | | |
| Any Mixed Background | | | |
| Indian | | | |
| Pakistani | | | |
| Bangladeshi | | | |
| Chinese | | | |
| Any other Asian Background | | | |
| Caribbean | | | |
| African | | | |
| Any other Black Background | | | |
| Any Other Background | | | |
| Unknown | | | |
| Disability | Number | Proportion (%) | |
| Disabled | | | |
| Not disabled | 4 | 100 | |
| Not Known | | | |

The total number of external applicants by ethnic background, gender and disability during 2009 are shown on these tables.

Breakdown of Staff Leaving the Employment of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board by Ethnicity During 2009

| White Scottish | White English | White Welsh | White Irish | White British | White Other | Asian or Asian British Other | Black or Black British Other | Other | Un-known | Not Recorded | Totals |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|----------|--------------|--------|
| 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |

Breakdown of Leavers By Gender

| Female | Male | TOTALS |
|--------|------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 1 |

Breakdown of Leavers By Disability

| Not Disabled | Disabled | Not Recorded | TOTALS |
|--------------|----------|--------------|--------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |