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**To:** Equalities Panel

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**Report by:** Head of Human Resources

<p><b>Promoting Diversity in Employment - Progress Report</b></p>
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**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update the Panel on the progress with the Human Resources Diversity Action Plan since April 2004.
- 1.2 The report provides background information. Section 3 details the work completed since April and section 4 details the actions scheduled for the months ahead.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the April 2004 meeting the Equalities Panel were provided with an analysis of the Council's workforce by reference to the City Pay Bands and the Equalities Categories. The analysis highlighted issues raised by the data and set out some proposed actions to address the issues, which were subsequently included in the Human Resources Diversity Action Plan.
- 2.2 In addition the Panel raised several points, in particular about recruitment processes, which have also been incorporated into the action plan. The action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

**3. Achievements Since April 2004**

- 3.1 HR resources during 2003/04 have concentrated on Equal Pay within Cambridge City Council, including a large-scale review of terms and conditions of employment and the implementation of the Single Status Agreement. This has meant that jobs across the Council have been assessed using a single job evaluation scheme to determine their pay band on the new City Council Pay Bands. In developing the scheme checks were made to assess the impact for BME groups, age, gender and disability. Other potential equal pay issues were addressed by the removal of bonuses (mostly for 'male' employee groups) and standard application of a range of allowances. Staff were allowed to appeal and of the 92 appeals received about 50% gained more points and were moved to the next pay band. This will provide a firm platform for future

development of pay and reward policies. Never the less it will be important to undertake Equal Pay Audits on a regular basis. The detail and methodology will be agreed with the Trades Unions.

- 3.2 There are is now a named Equalities Champion on Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Link Officers have been identified for each department. Their role is to provide the link between the Council's corporate equalities agenda, and the departmental equalities actions and service delivery. They will also be responsible for overseeing their own department's Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) and for liaising and reporting corporately on EIA's processes and outcomes.
- 3.3 The Council has hosted a number of events to raise awareness amongst managers and staff of diversity and discrimination issues, including Stonewall, UNISON, other Local Authorities and Cambridgeshire Police. This gives the Council an opportunity to share good practice and network with other organisations in the public and private sector.
- 3.4 BME and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff groups have been set up for quarterly meetings and staff attendance is still growing at each meeting.
- 3.5 The legislative changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004 have been reviewed and employment and services issues addressed as a result.
- 3.6 An on-line application form and enhanced recruitment information has been developed to give more choice to employment applicants in how they might wish to apply.
- 3.7 Discussions with other Cambridgeshire Councils have started to set up a joint graduate recruitment and training scheme from 2005. The City Council's participation is dependent on a bid for funding in the January budget cycle.
- 3.8 Phase one of the introduction of a new HR/Payroll system has been implemented. Phase two (due to start in November) includes improved management and workforce information, a recruitment model that will help to manage to recruitment process and capture important monitoring information, and on-line training administration.
- 3.9 Equality Impact Assessments have been piloted in Community Development and are now being rolled out across the Council.

#### **4 Next Steps – planned action for the next 6-12 months**

- 4.1 The Council's first Recruitment & Retention Strategy and action plan will be drafted by the end of Dec 2004 for consultation with the Trades Unions and Council managers before agreement by Members in the New Year. The action plan will include some of the issues previously raised by the panel. A copy of the final strategy will be provided to the Equalities Panel for information.

- 4.2 The City Council is working in partnership with the County Council and several other local District Councils to procure a new Recruitment Advertising Service to commence in April 2005. The new service will be asked to help the Council's to develop more creative and cost effective approaches to recruitment advertising. Attracting candidates from a diverse background will be a key requirement.
- 4.3 The programme to develop and implement the Council's first workforce plan has been agreed, and subject to resources, a draft this should be complete by March/April 2005.
- 4.4 The first annual Equal Pay audit will be carried out in mid 2005. (Para 3,1 above refers)
- 4.5 The Council's new People Strategy will be drafted for consultation with the Trades Unions and managers by December 2004.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In the past few months' good foundations have been set in place to move the equality agenda forward over the next 12 months. Much of this work has focused on the need to mainstream diversity and move away from an ad hoc approach of delivering on diversity issues. The ongoing pressures on HR resources to address the many reactive operational regularly issues facing the Council have meant that adequate time and energy has been given to some strategic issues, including diversity. We are looking at how this can be addressed for the future.
- 5.2 Clearly more work is required before the Council achieves its aim of having a culturally rich and diverse workforce, however good progress is being made and the next steps are in place for the next few months.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The panel is asked to note the contents of the report.

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