

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>		Item No	4
<b>Title</b>	Gender Equality Scheme (GES)			
<b>Wards</b>	All			
<b>Contributors</b>	Chief Executive / Executive Director for Resources (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance)			
<b>Class</b>	Open	Date	14 March 2007	

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces the Council's proposed Gender Equality Scheme (GES). It sets out the legislative requirements on Lewisham and the actions we have taken to meet them. The scheme is set within the context of the Community Strategy and actions to deliver the scheme support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.
- 1.2 The scheme details the results of data analysis as well as consultations with residents and stakeholders. These activities have enabled us to identify women and men's priorities which have helped to shape the gender equality objectives of the Council. These objectives have a significant fit with the Council's priorities and actions under the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the GES action plan has been set within the wider framework of the LAA. The report also summarises our responsibilities to staff and the actions in relation to employment and development which we will take to meet the legislative requirements.
- 1.3 Aspects of the scheme's development, particularly identifying the priorities of women and men in Lewisham, have been done in collaboration with our public sector partners and will contribute to the 'Equality for All' project. This seeks to develop a single equality scheme framework for the borough for 2008 – 2011.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet
- note the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty
  - agree the overarching gender objectives and actions set out in section six of this report as the Council's Gender Equality Scheme.

## 3. Legislative requirements

- 3.1 The Equality Act, 2006 set out the requirement for all public authorities to promote gender equality. The Gender Equality Duty has two parts: a 'general' duty and a 'specific' duty for gender equality. The general duty places a legal duty on Lewisham Council to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

3.2 To help meet this general duty, Lewisham Council, like most other public bodies covered by the duty, has a specific duty to:

- produce a Gender Equality Scheme identifying its gender equality goals and actions to meet them in consultation with employees and stakeholders
- monitor and review progress annually
- review the scheme every three years
- develop objectives to address any gender pay gap identified through audit, including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation
- conduct and publish gender impact assessments for all major policy developments and publish its criteria for conducting such impact assessments

3.3 The Equality Act 2006 requires, that by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007, Lewisham publishes a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) outlining how we intend to meet the requirements of the Duty.

#### **4. Policy context**

4.1 This Gender Equality Scheme supports the Council's delivery on commitments in the Community Strategy – 'designing equality into service delivery and designing out discrimination' – and the corporate priorities. The scheme has been developed by using evidence from research and consultation, equalities impact assessments and performance monitoring data. The purpose of this scheme is therefore to:

- demonstrate how gender equality is mainstreamed in all areas of the Council's work
- meet and exceed our legal duties in relation to gender equality
- set out our equality objectives on how we intend to tackle gender inequality, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between women and men, boys and girls.

4.2 Lewisham's Gender Equality Scheme forms part of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) that was first published in February 2006. The CES sets the Council's approach to equality covering the themes of race, age, gender, disability, religion / belief and sexual orientation. The CES is a key document that underpins the Council's corporate priorities and as such is core to all our work. We will be reviewing our progress on the CES by the end of April 2007, reporting to members and publishing the results on the Lewisham Website.

4.2 Where organisations have comprehensive schemes such as we have in Lewisham, the statutory Code of Practice recommends that the gender priorities for the organisation are clear. It also stresses that the actions to achieve these objectives are set out in such a way that staff are clear about their responsibilities and citizens are clear about what actions the Council is taking to deliver the scheme. A stand alone Gender Equality Scheme ensures

transparency in demonstrating to all stakeholders that the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty are met.

- 4.3 Lewisham's GES action plan updates and develops the gender related elements of the CES action plan.

## **5 Background and content of the Scheme**

- 5.1 This GES has built on the actions Lewisham has already been taking over a number of years to promote gender equality. Sections 1 – 6 of the GES set out
- the requirements of the scheme
  - what we know about men and women in Lewisham
  - our approach to partnership work
  - our corporate priorities
  - our overall commitment to equality and gender equality
- 5.2 The GES supports the Community Strategy in that it draws on the work the Council is already doing, including the Council's corporate priorities, the statutory plans that underpin our specific service delivery, the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme as well as the Local Area Agreement.
- 5.3 Section 7 of the GES sets out our data analysis and consultation to identify local priorities as required by the specific duty. The Council, together with public sector partners, carried out a specific gender consultation event held in December 2006 introduced by the Cabinet Member for Resources. Feedback from residents and partners attending the event was very positive. Additional consultation and engagement with stakeholder groups across the borough was also undertaken. The data analysis, together with the engagement activities, has informed the scheme.
- 5.4 Section 8 sets out the proposed gender objectives, (see section six of this report). Section 9 details the employment commitments. Sections 10 – 16 address performance and mainstreaming the scheme across the authority. The GES also includes sections on access to services, procurement, complaints, equality impact assessments as well as monitoring, review and scrutiny. The action plan is attached as Appendix 1 to the GES.

## **6 Analysis of data and results of consultation**

- 6.1 As required by the legislation, we have looked at the information we know about women and men in Lewisham and analysed a range of consultation activities within the last two years. This data has been taken from the 2001 Census, service user data, results of equality impact assessments as well as our Annual Residents Survey, the 2006 BVPI survey and service consultations.

- 6.2 In addition we held a consultation event with local residents and visited a range of community and stakeholder groups. The aim of these actions was to identify the key priorities of women and men in Lewisham and to understand any significant differences.
- 6.3 Whilst we cannot draw broad quantitative conclusions from the consultation event, it does provide the Council with greater insight into what local women and men feel about their quality of life, and why they think it. The event focused on five areas: safety; health; living, working and learning in Lewisham. The views of women and men attending the event were most different in relation to learning and working:
- a) learning
- Women enjoyed learning and see it as very important for personal development, building confidence and meeting new people
  - Men saw learning as primarily for personal advancement and learning of essential skills needed for work
- b) work
- Men regarded work and progression at work as important for their self-esteem and feeling part of a community as well as earning money
  - Women approached work from a more pragmatic point of view and see it as primarily for earning money
- 6.4 With regard to health, both men and women felt that they did not do enough to look after their health, however they had different perspectives:
- Women felt they did not have enough time to look after themselves
  - Men felt that there was an insufficient focus on men's health by professionals
- 6.5 The focus for women and men towards safety and living in Lewisham were more similar, with the same issues being key for both men and women. Key themes were:
- tackling antisocial behaviour
  - promoting community cohesion, particularly between people of different ages rather than across different ethnic groups
  - providing better recreational and leisure facilities for both adults and young people
- 6.6 Stakeholders representing men, black and minority ethnic communities, including Race Equality Action Lewisham, refugee and asylum seekers, older women, women in the voluntary sector and those working with domestic violence have also been involved in developing this scheme.
- 6.7 Key comments from these stakeholders can be summarised as follows:
- take account of the needs of women and men from different communities when

developing or delivering services

- work with voluntary and community sector (VCS) to help citizens understand gender discrimination and where they can go to seek advice and redress
- enable women and men who have newly arrived in the borough to access language classes so that they can communicate, feel confident in accessing services and safe in their neighbourhoods
- work with Transport for London to ensure public transport is safe for women and men of all ages
- redress the under-representation of women from the community involved in regeneration by working with the VCS to provide training and support

6.8 An analysis of the data we already hold and the feedback from residents and stakeholders as outlined above, has given us the following key messages:

- the concerns of women and men in Lewisham are similar in many ways
- differences do remain in key areas of
  - Employment
  - Safety
  - Young people's achievement and involvement
  - Health
- we need to be even better at disaggregating data to inform service development and change
- the needs of particular groups of men and women will also differ in respect of other aspects of their diversity, for example, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and faith, religion and belief.

## **7 Our gender equality objectives**

7.1 The following overarching gender equality objectives are drawn from the preceding analysis:

- Make Lewisham even safer for women and men, girls and boys
- Improve the employment opportunities for women and men in Lewisham
- Continue to raise the achievement of young people, with particular reference to boys' attainment
- Improve the health and wellbeing of women and men in Lewisham with a focus on taking action to reduce health inequalities

These objectives will be supported by strengthening data collection, disaggregation and analysis by gender, ensuring it is used to inform service development and change.

7.2 These objectives support the Council's corporate. In particular they address:

- community leadership and empowerment

- young people's achievement and involvement
- safety, security and a visible presence
- strengthening the local economy
- active, healthy citizens
- inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

7.3 The objectives are aligned to actions being taken forward as part of the Local Area Agreement. Specific actions and data disaggregated by gender will contribute to more detailed evidence to demonstrate we are improving the life chances of some of our most disadvantaged citizens.

7.4 To implement the GES objectives, Lewisham Council has developed an action plan within the framework of the Local Area Agreement themes:

- Children and Young People
- Safer Stronger Communities
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Healthier Communities and Older People

The action plan is attached as appendix 1 of the scheme. A summary of actions within each objective is detailed below.

7.5 **Make Lewisham even safer for women and men, including girls and boys**

Our overall objectives in relation to safety in Lewisham are detailed in A Safer Lewisham – the Council's 3 year Crime, Drugs and Anti Social Behaviour Strategy, 2005 – 2008. The Gender Equality Scheme actions draw out key gender specific issues we wish to address. Actions under this objective will address:

- the safety of girls and boys
- the over-representation of young BME men in the criminal justice system
- the specific needs of young men and women in the criminal justice system
- the impact of domestic violence on the lives of young people
- services to improve the lives of women and men experiencing domestic violence
- actions to secure prosecutions for domestic violence
- the safety of women and men at night – with reference to public transport and street lighting

7.6 **Improve the employment opportunities for women and men**

Our aim in economic development is to support those residents who are most disadvantaged by working to raise skill levels, encourage those on incapacity benefit and single parents back into work. There is an additional emphasis on those parts of the borough with greater numbers of residents lacking qualifications and employable skills which often go hand in hand with other elements of deprivation and low esteem. The GES and supporting action plan supports these aims and addresses:

- Targeting skills development and training within Lewisham's most deprived wards
- Targeting skills development and training to men from a variety of Council and community based sites.
- Providing skills development for women in non-traditional trades
- Providing affordable child care and welfare support to ease the transition to work

**7.7 Continue to raise the achievement of young people, with particular reference to boys**  
 Lewisham's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2006 – 2009 sets out the actions the Council and its partners will take to fulfil the promise: 'Together with families, we will improve the lives and life chances of children and young people of Lewisham, by ensuring that they are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing'. The GES supports the delivery of the plan and actions address:

- Raising the achievement of boys within school
- Providing community based training and development opportunities, with a focus on boys
- Enhancing young women's self esteem
- Enhancing the safety of girls and boys at a personal and community level
- Understanding gender roles and stereotypes
- Supporting teenage mothers and fathers
- Reducing teenage conception

**7.8 Improve the health and wellbeing of women and men in Lewisham**

Our overall aim is to reduce the level of health inequality in Lewisham. This means working to achieve equality of access to health services, as well as increased take up of services and improved outcomes. In relation to gender, actions may be different for men and women depending on need and circumstances. The actions will address:

- improving the health and wellbeing of men and women, through tackling health inequalities in partnership with PCT and other health providers
- improving the health and wellbeing of men of all ages and in particular:
  - mental health of young men, particularly from BME communities
  - the physical and mental health needs of men and boys with caring responsibilities
- Improving health and wellbeing of women, men, boys and girls through physical and cultural activities

## **8 Our employment requirements**

**8.1** The Council has strong personnel and development practices that already address key gender issues in employment. These are delivered through the People Management

Strategy. Chapter 9 of the GES supports the delivery of the people Management Strategy and includes our approach to:

- identifying and delivering a gender balanced workforce at all levels of the organisation and monitoring applications for employment
- flexible working for men and women, including maternity, paternity and carers leave
- tackling harassment and discrimination

8.2 The statutory code of practice to the scheme also requires public sector agencies to set gender pay objectives in the light of any gender pay gap identified. The Council is currently implementing the single status agreement and will carry out a gender pay audit once this is in place in April 2007. Any gender pay gaps identified following this audit will be addressed.

8.3 The Council is in the process of preparing a statement setting out our commitment to support employees undergoing gender reassignment. We will develop a full policy, consulting the relevant stakeholders, which we aim to launch in December 2007. All new employees are required to produce evidence of their identity, but to protect the dignity and privacy of transgender people we state that this can be official documentation other than their birth certificate.

8.4 The 2006 Talkback survey of staff did not identify any differences in the views of men and women who work for Lewisham. Additional focus groups will be undertaken with staff and any issues raised will be addressed through the actions set out in the employment section in the action plan and will be used to inform personnel policy reviews to be carried out during 2007/08.

## **9 Working with our partners**

9.1 Lewisham Council jointly with its partners is committed 'together to make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn'. The Community Strategy identifies the priorities we share and the Local Area Agreement is the key expression of joint delivery.

9.2 The council is working with its partners and alongside the local community to develop a single equality scheme framework for the borough. The development of the GES has provided an opportunity to pilot our joint approach, particularly in the area of consultation.

## **10 Comments of the Safer and Stronger Select Committee**

10.1 Members of the Safer and Stronger Committee considered the draft Gender Equality Scheme at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007. They were particularly interested in the numbers of staff who take up the opportunity of job sharing and the arrangements for single status and gender pay audit.

## **11 Financial Implications**

- 11.1 The Council's 2007/08 budget report makes provision for the impact of single status. Any financial implications on the other actions outlined in the GES will be incorporated into the service planning processes and existing budgets.

## **12 Legal Implications**

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2006 empowers the Secretary of state to make orders to ensure that public authorities better meet their duty under S76A (1) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This section places on local authorities a duty when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women ('the General Duty')
- 12.2 The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act to place a statutory duty on all public authorities to produce a Gender Equality Scheme ('the GES') showing how it intends to fulfill its duties under the order by the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007.
- 12.3. The requirements of the GES are that the Council must consult its employees, service users and others who have an interest in the way it carries out its functions. The GES must set out the overall objectives the Council considers necessary to meet the General Duty.
- 12.4 The duty applies to of the Council's functions including policy-making, service provision, employment matters, and in relation to enforcement or any statutory discretion and decision-making. It also applies to a public authority in relation to services and functions which are contracted out. In addition, it applies to private and voluntary bodies which are carrying out public functions, but only in respect of those functions.
- 12.5 The scheme needs to set out the overall objectives it has identified as being necessary to perform its General Duty.
- 12.6 In formulating its overall objectives the Council needs consider the need to have objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- 12.7 The scheme must set out the actions the Council has taken or intends to take-
- to gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
  - Makes use of such information and any other as the Council considers relevant to meet its General Duty and to regularly review the effectiveness of the actions and or its arrangements for the preparation of subsequent schemes;
  - to consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
  - to assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.

- Achieve the fulfilment of the objectives set out in the GES

12.8 The Council is required to implement the actions set out in its GES within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

12.9 To report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

12.10 The first scheme must be published by 30 April 2007.

12.11 The newly created Commission for Equality and Human Rights has been given the power to enforce the duty where it thinks a public authority has failed to meet their duty by service of a notice requiring an authority to take steps taken to comply with the duty, which if not complied with the Commissioner can apply to the County Courts to enforce.

12.12 The draft scheme meets the statutory criteria required by the order.

### **13 Crime and Disorder Implications**

13.1 There are significant crime and disorder implications for the GES. Safety is a key issue for women and men in the borough. Our data analysis indicates that men, particularly black young men are victims of crime as well as being over represented in the criminal justice system. 85% of victims of domestic violence are women. Domestic violence forms over 25% of all violent crime in Lewisham.

13.2 Making Lewisham even safer for women and men is one of the overarching objectives of the Gender Equality Scheme. Actions to deliver this objective are detailed in paragraph 7.5.

### **14 Equality Implications**

14.1 The purpose of the (GES) is to ensure equality for women and men in Lewisham and male and female staff of the Council. The GES outlines how Lewisham is meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2006, which introduced the Gender Equality Duty. It forms a part of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme, which demonstrates our commitment to equality across all strands: age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

### **15 Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications for the GES.

### **16 Conclusion**

The GES has been produced as part of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme to ensure that the Council is meeting the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty introduced by the Equality Act 2006.

## **Background papers**

There are no background papers to this report

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