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To: Resources and Infrastructure Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 15th April 2010

Subject: CFE Equality & Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2010-2013

Classification: unrestricted items will need to be agreed with the POSC Chair

Summary: The purpose of this report is to provide Children, Families and Education (CFE) SMT an updated draft Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2010-2013 for their consideration and approval.

1. Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) has made a commitment to achieving excellence under the new Equality Framework for Local Government during 2011.

An authority that is considered *Excellent* under the new framework will be expected to display a high level of understanding and competence in practice and outcomes with regard to equality across the five performance areas. To achieve excellent will be a significant jump for CFE and KCC as a whole.

The IDeA note that in working towards the framework, "it may be sensible for larger authorities to work ...by directorate as then each service area can apply the Framework to the services they are providing. Each directorate can ... then feed into the organisation so directorates can report on their 'compliance' and the whole organisation can see how they are doing" (IDeA: 2010).

As such if the ambition of achieving *Excellence* against the Equality Framework for Local government is to be realised, it is important that CFE is able to

evidence its performance against the framework and more importantly continue to ensure excellent outcomes through narrowing the gap of inequality for children and young people in Kent.

The IDeA has created the Equality Framework for Local Government which focuses on outcomes from equality initiatives and is aligned to other inspection regimes such as the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). It identifies five key areas of performance:

- Knowing your community and equality mapping;
- Place shaping leadership, partnership and organisational commitment;
- Community engagement and satisfaction;
- Responsive services and customer care;
- Modern and Diverse Workforce.

2. Draft CFE Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2010-2013

The CFE Equality and Diversity Action Plan has been developed in consultation with key managers and officers within CFE by specialist equality consultants, Equality Works.

Equality considerations should not only be championed but included as part of clear business considerations. In order to do this, the Strategic Action Plan will need to be clearly positioned as a core CFE plan with clear alignment to Business Plans and the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

The development of the Plan enables a strategic approach to addressing equality issues within CFE which allows for greater mainstreaming inclusion and accountability for equalities work. Such an approach enables the Directorate to capture existing best practice activities within CFE and to share it across to other areas of the businesses.

This allows for an integrated approach to equality impacting the core activities within CFE without reducing the equalities agenda to a tick box approach. It seeks to place ownership for equality and associated outcomes in the areas of the business which they are most likely to be achieved. The Plan is set to cover a three year period, 2010-2013 and will be supported by an annual action plan co-ordinated by the Equality and Diversity manager. The draft Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

This plan will enable CFE to evidence excellence against the Equality Framework for Local Government

• Championing Equalities

CFE has appointed a senior equality champion and representative at Equality Lead Officers Group (ELOG) and the Strategic Equality Group (SEG). The CFE

representative will ensure that the interests of CFE SMT are represented and give momentum and strategic direction for equalities across KCC as well as championing equality considerations at CFE SMT.

This element will have a significant influence in CFE's performance against the Equality Framework for Local Government as it will ensure that equality and diversity issues are a core consideration with clear leadership which helps to shape and direct policy, service delivery, and ensure a consistent communication of our policy and practice.

- **Resource Implications**

No resources have been identified for the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan as this will be included as part of the core business of Commissioning and Partnerships group and specifically the Equality and Diversity strand. However, this approach requires managers to embed equality and diversity into core business activity.

- **Services consulted**

- Equality champions

The following consultation across CFE took place between October - December 2009:

- One to one interviews with key individuals from within CFE as well as KCC's corporate equalities team and representatives of staff network groups;
 - Equality briefing sessions to cover the key principles within the Equality Framework for Local Government;
 - Workshops aimed at building the integrated equality and inclusion action plan.

In developing the Plan, consideration was given to the outcomes of the 2008-2011 CYPP Review 2009, the annual needs assessment and the consultation activity with CFE.

- **Equality Implications**

No adverse impacts have been identified in relation to the developing and implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. Equality considerations will be reviewed as part of the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Action Plan.

3. Recommendations

Recommendations:

Members of the Resources and Infrastructure Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- Note and agree the new strategic approach to Equality and Diversity within Children Families and Education
- Agree to receive regular reports of activity against the Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2010 to 2013
- To note the CFE SMT Champion who will act as a lead for activity

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Background Documents: Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan 2010-2013

Other Useful Information: None