

## Document Control Sheet

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Corporate Equality Policy</b>
<b>Summary of purpose</b>	Policy to state the Council's commitment to equalities
<b>Prepared by</b>	Executive Assistant
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<b>Approved by</b>	Approved by Finance and Corporate Services Committee 12 June 2012 and Council 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
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### Validity Statement

This document is due for review by the date shown above, after which it may become invalid. Users of the strategy or policy should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the document.



MALDON DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Maldon District Council Corporate Equality Policy 2012-2015

## 1. Introduction

Maldon District Council's Corporate Equality Policy for the period 2009 – 2012 outlined the various equalities legislation that the Council complied with.

That legislation has now been superseded by the Equality Act 2010 which brings all the previous legislation into one place. The Corporate Equality Policy has therefore been updated to reflect the requirements of that Act.

## 2. Our Commitment

Maldon District Council has a key role to play in ensuring equal opportunity across the District and in ensuring that there are good relations between the different community groups.

The rural nature of the District and the composition of the population bring special challenges and the Council recognizes that.

The Council is therefore committed to equality of access and equality of opportunity for all those people living and working in the District. It is committed to understanding the composition of its communities and to understanding the barriers that face them.

All, employees and service users will be treated with fairness and respect, and without discrimination. Appropriate monitoring of service usage will take place in order to understand our customers and ensure that any barriers to services are removed.

Similarly, the profile of the Council's workforce and its recruitment processes will be monitored in order to understand the issues that affect them and ensure equal treatment for all.

The Council is committed to carrying out the actions needed to meet its equality aims and targets and will ensure that an equality action plan is followed to achieve them.

## 3. Equality Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The Public Sector Equality Duty replaces the previous race, disability and gender equality duties and it sets targets and requirements for those who are governed by it.

The Public Sector Equality Duty covers eight protected characteristics, which are

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Those organisations covered by the Duty must have due regard to three equality 'aims'. These are to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

### **Specific Requirements**

As well as the need to have due regard to the three aims, the regulations also set specific requirements for the public sector to fulfil. It is required that local authorities publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and refresh that information at least annually. Secondly, local authorities have to publish relevant equality objectives by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and at least every four years after that.

Briefly, some of the key points of the Duty are as follows

- Organisations must be aware of the general equality duty
- The duty must be taken into account when policies are drawn up and decisions are made
- It's good practice to keep records of how equalities were considered during decision making
- To collect and use relevant equality information
- Engage with people to gather that equality information and also to understand the barriers that affect them
- Where services are outsourced or delivered by external suppliers the requirement to meet the equality duty applies equally to them too.

#### 4. How will we meet the requirements of the above legislation

The Council is committed to delivering the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. All Council Services, staff and Councillors will adhere to the Council's Equality Policy and will work to ensure that equalities are embedded in everything that they do.

The Council therefore adopts the following principles in order to meet those requirements.

- (i) The principles of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty will be embraced. The specific tasks and targets within the Duty will be delivered in a way that is proportionate to the demographic make up of the District.
- (ii) Regular equality updates are made to Members either through the Members Bulletin or through reports to Committee meetings. Similarly Corporate Management Team and Officers are kept informed of progress through email and intranet updates.
- (iii) Equalities are analysed prior to the making of decisions or the setting of policies. In addition, a programme of assessments is followed.
- (iv) All committee reports include a section on equalities in order that the subject is included within decision making and a record kept.
- (v) Appropriate equalities information is collected on a regular and ongoing basis in order that equality information can be published at least annually. More importantly, that information will be used to understand our customers and residents, their needs and the barriers that they face.
- (vi) Equalities will be included, as appropriate, within procurement arrangements.
- (vii) Any other tasks or projects that are considered to be appropriate to achieving the Public Sector Equality Duty will be instigated as and when necessary.

## 5. Equality Objectives

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that local authorities set at least one relevant equality objective to be published by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The Council has therefore set the following objectives.

- a) *To work with community groups and carry out an appropriate public consultation exercise to examine the issues that affect the vulnerable across the different age groups in the District. The project to pay particular attention to the interrelated areas of reducing social and geographical exclusion and access to services. Draw up an action plan aimed at addressing the conclusions. For completion and approval by 31 August 2013.*
- b) *To carry out the actions required to address the gaps in equality information held. This will include, but will not be limited to, collection of monitoring information within complaints forms and questionnaires and carrying out customer satisfaction surveys. The equality information to be improved and updated by 31 December 2012 and work will then commence to identify and rectify inequalities within the District and that progress will be fed back to Council.*

These objectives were set up after analysis of the equality information, discussions with Officers and Corporate Management Team and then consultation with Councillors and appropriate community groups (Parish Councils, CAB, CVS, CVS member organisations and Age UK (Essex)).

6. Monitoring

The Council will monitor equality progress on a regular basis and report back to both Corporate Management Team and Committee as appropriate.

Equalities impact will be analysed during decision making and during a programme of regular impact assessments.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed when there is a major change to the equality legislation or in 2015, whichever is soonest.