

**Body:** CABINET

**Date:** 15 December 2010

**Subject:** Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report

**Report Of:** Councillor Alex Hough, Disability Champion and  
Monica Ray, Communication and Participation  
Manager

**Ward(s)** All

**Purpose** To report progress on the Council's work in connection with the Disability Equality Duty throughout 2010 as obligated by legislation.

**Recommendation:**

- Cabinet notes the progress made against the statutory Disability Equality Duty, and the guidance covering the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Disability at appendix 2.

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## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 was amended in 2005 with revisions also placing general and specific duties on local authorities. The totality of these duties is referred to as the 'Disability Equality Duty'. The Council met its first obligations under the specific requirements to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme when it approved the Scheme in December 2006. The specific duty of the DDA also requires authorities to report annually on the progress they are making towards the Disability Equality Duty.
- 1.2 This paper introduces the fourth annual report which contains the current action plan with progress. Copies of the action plan and annual report have been sent to Cabinet Members and the Opposition Leader only in the interests of economy. Copies have been placed in the Members' Room, at the Town Hall Reception and on the Council's website at the link below. Further copies are available on request.  
<http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/council/meetings/cabinet>.

## **2.0 The new Equality Act 2010**

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 consolidates existing anti-discrimination legislation into one piece of over-arching policy and extends legislation to include the provision of goods, services and facilities. The Equality Act now replaces the DDA and withdraws the requirement to report annually on single strand issues; however the obligations set out in the Disability Equality Duty are covered almost entirely by the Act. Therefore in future the annual report for equality will include a disability equality chapter.
- 2.2 The impact of the Act will resonate throughout the public and private sectors, with the main measures of the Act (about 90%) implemented from October 2010. Certain elements of the Act covering the remaining 10%, such as socioeconomic have been abandoned by the coalition government and areas such as dual discrimination and diversity reporting by political parties are still under review.
- 2.3 The single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is expected in April 2011 and through the standardisation and extension of existing duties, the public sector will have a duty to consider fair access for all when designing services. Consultation on the PSED section of the Act is coming to an end so the outcomes are yet unknown, but it is expected that the main duties to: promote equal opportunity; eliminate discrimination; and foster good relations between all groups, will not change.
- 2.4 How the Equality Act 2010 specifically impacts on disabled people is shown in appendix 2 to the plan. A more detailed briefing paper will be released to all Councillors shortly.

## **3.0 Consultation**

- 3.1 Consultation on the disability equality duty annual report is taking place with disabled people who form part of the Disability Involvement Group and the groups they represent; it is also on the Council's consultation web pages. The report has also been distributed to the Community Network, and to wider groups and organisations representing disabled people who do not form part of the DIG, as well as Officers within the Council and our partner authorities.

## **4.0 Resource Implications**

- 4.1 Financial implications associated with the administration of the DIG and in the provision of short-term initiatives will be covered by existing budgets.
- 4.2 Officer time dedicated to the DIG and in the delivery of certain short-term initiatives planned for 2011 is currently covered by existing resource levels.

## **5.0 Other Implications - Equality**

- 5.1 Work is currently ongoing which will help raise awareness throughout the organisations workforce of the impact that Act has on their services and on them as officers working in the public sector. This will become clearer as the final PSED is agreed and published. The ongoing activities of the DIG assist in the Council's compliance with the Equality Act as far as this protected characteristic is concerned, and work towards the continual improvement and achievement of the Council's wider equality agenda.

**Monica Ray**  
**Communication and Participation Manager**

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### **Background Papers:**

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

*Disability Equality Scheme*

*Equality Act 2010*

*Government Equalities Office Disability Quick Start Guide*

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.

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