

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

8 September 2003

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MONITORING REPORT

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 601 – Equality and Diversity Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides monitoring information on Equal Opportunities as required under the Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plans. The information provided covers developments in employment and service delivery and statistical monitoring information on recruitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Personnel Performance Monitoring report should in future contain the equality and diversity information as set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plans. This will enable the monitoring of trends on a quarterly basis along with regular progress updates on the Action Plans.

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### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MONITORING REPORT

#### Report of Director of Personnel

#### DETAIL:

##### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 There is a requirement set out in the Employment Action Plan to monitor and report to Personnel Committee information on the diversity of current Council employees and recruitment monitoring statistics. This report presents the information currently available and also gives an update on the Equality and Diversity Action Plans.

##### 2 Policy Development

- 2.1 The Equality and Diversity Policy (CAB 601) was developed in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act which marks the first major enhancement of the country's race equality legislation for nearly 25 years. The Act imposes a duty on local authorities and other public bodies to promote race equality. It is incumbent on every institution to examine their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our communities.
- 2.2 The Act strengthens the 1976 Act by outlawing race discrimination in all public functions and places a positive duty on public authorities to actively promote race equality, that is, to avoid race discrimination before it occurs. It also requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. We are required to introduce a Race Equality Scheme, which sets out how we will achieve these aims. This Scheme has been incorporated into a wider Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plans.
- 2.3 Each existing policy, and new policies developed, will be assessed on an Equal Opportunities basis to ensure that there is compliance throughout the Council's policies.
- 2.4 As part of the Council's commitment to the support of the employment of people with a disability and to the retention of staff who may become disabled during their employment a policy for the Management of Absence has been agreed and implemented along with a Well Being Policy.
- 2.5 The Council's policies relating to flexible working, maternity, paternity and parental leave have been developed in the light of recent legislation. Also family friendly policies and childcare provision are under review and will be reported on later in the year

### **3 Training**

- 3.1 Specific training requirements have been identified. It has been recognised that there is now a need to update existing staff on equality issues and this will be discussed at the Equal Opportunities Group and training plans developed to address this. The Environmental Health and Housing Department have undertaken significant training as part of the development of the BME Strategy for Housing Services.
- 3.2 All new staff receive equal opportunities training, covering existing legislation and Council policy during their induction training.
- 3.3 Specific equal opportunities training for recruitment and selection is provided as part of the in-house training programme. Training to assist in the implementation of the Management of Absence Policy and the Well Being Policy is also included in the in-house training programme.
- 3.4 Training will also be offered in equal opportunities awareness for Members.

### **4 Equal Opportunities Group and progress on the Action Plans**

- 4.1 The Equal Opportunities Group meets on a regular basis to monitor progress on the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plans. The group, disseminates good practice and provides a link between work taking place in all departments and raises any equalities issues requiring corporate attention. The group also assists in the assessment of the effectiveness of equal opportunities in service delivery across departments and identifying training requirements.
- 4.2 An update on progress on the Action Plans is shown in Appendix 1. Additional guidance has been requested to support the timetable for the Review of Services which is currently being developed.
- 4.3 It is recommended that information on progress on the Action Plans will be provided in future performance monitoring reports and be published in accordance with the Action Plans.

### **5 Equal Opportunities Monitoring Statistics**

- 5.1 Appendix 2 shows the breakdown by gender, disability and race of current staff within the Council. It is intended to provide annual monitoring information relating to current staff and include information on age and grade which will allow trends to be monitored.
- 5.2 Current staff are fairly equally split between male and female with just over 1% of all staff declaring themselves disabled and 2% of staff from an ethnic minority group. There are 18% of current staff who have not declared their ethnic origin.
- 5.3 An annual staff data check for existing staff will be conducted in September to update all information on the personnel database and to continue to comply with the Data Protection Act. These statistics, along with a comparison with the previous year, will be provided for the next quarterly performance monitoring report.

- 5.4 Appendix 3 shows a breakdown by gender, disability and race of applications received, applications short-listed and those appointed. The annual figure for 2002/03 is shown along with the information for the first quarter of 2003/04. It is intended to show quarterly and annual trends in future performance monitoring reports.
- 5.5 The overall number of vacancies has increased from previous years, 75 in 1997/98 to 95 in 1998/99 to its current level of 112 in 2002/03. This is borne out by the growth in establishment since April 1999 as reported to this Committee (PER57). The first quarter of 2003/04 indicates that this level of vacancies will continue with 27 vacancies within the first quarter. However, the vacancy rate is affected by seasonal variations with a reduction in the number of vacancies throughout the summer period.
- 5.6 The proportion of males and females applying for jobs in the last year is fairly equal although the first quarter of the current year shows a 10% drop in the proportion of male applicants.
- 5.7 The first quarter of the current year indicates a decrease from the previous year in the number of candidates shortlisted, this will be monitored to identify any trends. The split by gender for the number of candidates shortlisted is slightly higher for females and reflects the number of applications received by gender. The system used to shortlist candidates does not provide managers with gender details for applicants therefore minimising the risk of unfair discrimination.
- 5.8 As is the pattern in previous years, there is a higher proportion of females being appointed than males this also reflects the percentage of female applicants and shortlisted applicants.
- 5.9 The number of applicants from ethnic minority groups appears to have increased from previous years and was running at 6% last year compared to figures of 2.4% and 2.36% in 1997/98 and 1998/99 respectively. In the last year general advertisements have been placed promoting Winchester City Council as an equal opportunities employer. This together with the use of the internet for all advertisements which reaches both a national and international applicant base may have impacted on the increase in interest from ethnic minority applicants. There has been a slight increase in ethnic appointments.
- 5.10 The number of applications from disabled people has remained fairly constant at 2%. This year is the 'Year of the Disabled' and general advertisements have been placed promoting Winchester City Council as an equal opportunities employer reflecting our commitment to being a positive about disabled people organisation to encourage more applications from people with disabilities.
- 5.11 The figures show that whilst there appears to have been an increase in the number of applicants indicating that they have a disability, there were no disabled applicants appointed last year and only one appointed in the first quarter of this year. Again, managers are not provided with details of disability at the shortlist stage, however, providing a disabled applicant meets the essential criteria for the post, they will be offered an interview.

- 5.12 It is intended that monitoring information regarding the spread of applications from gender, race and disability and age and marital status across the grades will be provided in future performance monitoring reports and the information and results on progress will also be published in accordance with the Action Plans.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 6.1 Winchester City Council has a statutory duty to promote race equality and the Council is also responsible for ensuring that its services are accessible to all and to promote equality and fairness both in the way customers and staff are treated and through the services provided to the public.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.2 None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Various documents held in the Personnel Department

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Equality and Diversity Policy Action Plans

Appendix 2 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring – Current Employees

Appendix 3 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring – Recruitment