

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member Communities  
**DATE:** 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009  
**SUBJECT:** Sefton's Single Equality Scheme  
**WARDS AFFECTED:** All  
**REPORT OF:** Susan Holden, Equalities Director  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Ruth Austen-Vincent 0151 928 2233 ext 310  
**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

This report details current progress in Sefton Council on the Equality Framework for Local Government formerly the Equality Standard.

In addition to this the report will detail the partnership approach to delivery on equality and diversity developed through the Sefton wide Single Equality Scheme.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

To ensure Communities Committee is kept informed of work on the Equality Framework for Local Government and the Sefton Single Equality Scheme.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The Cabinet Member for Communities is recommended to :-

- i) Note the positive progress made on the equality framework and the developing partnership work around the Single Equality Scheme.
- ii) Receive updates on progress quarterly from Sefton Equalities Partnership on the Equalities Framework.

**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** No

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Immediately following the expiry of the call-in period for this report

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The Council is required to demonstrate progress in meeting the diverse needs of people who live and work in Sefton for a range of inspections including the Comprehensive Area Assessment. In addition to this the Council must meet the legal requirements placed on it through equality and diversity legislation.

## **IMPLICATIONS:**

Budget/Policy Framework: N/A

### Financial:-

There are no immediate financial implications to this report.

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal:

Risk Assessment: Not applicable

Asset Management: Not applicable

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS:**

SEP SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY NETWORKS FOR UNDER REPRESENTED GROUPS WHO HAVE FED INTO THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME AND REGULARLY FEED IN VIEWS AND IDEAS TO EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS ETC. WHICH ARE REFLECTED IN SOME OF THE ACTIVITY DETAILED BELOW.

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People	✓		

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

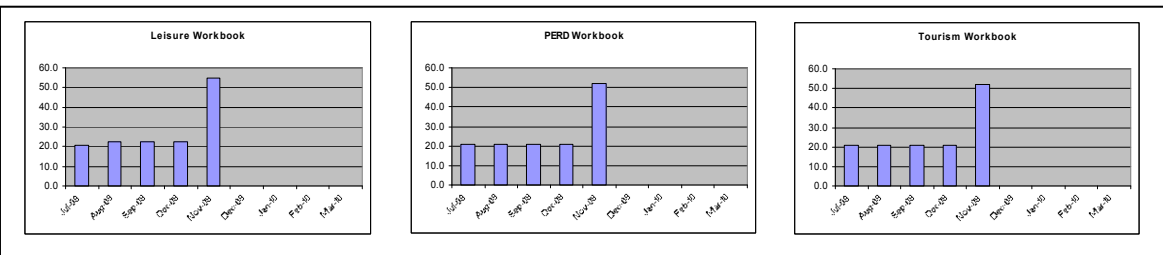
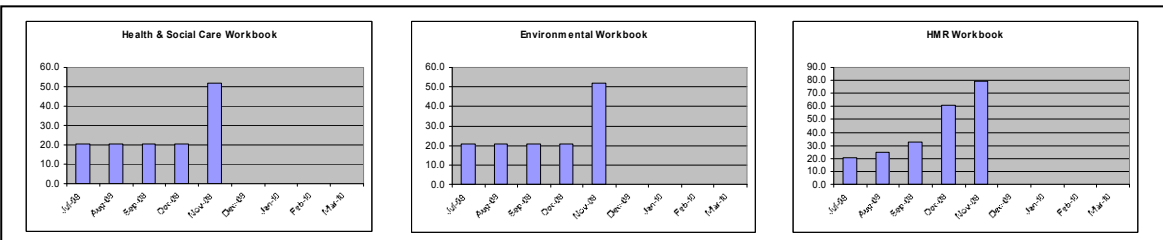
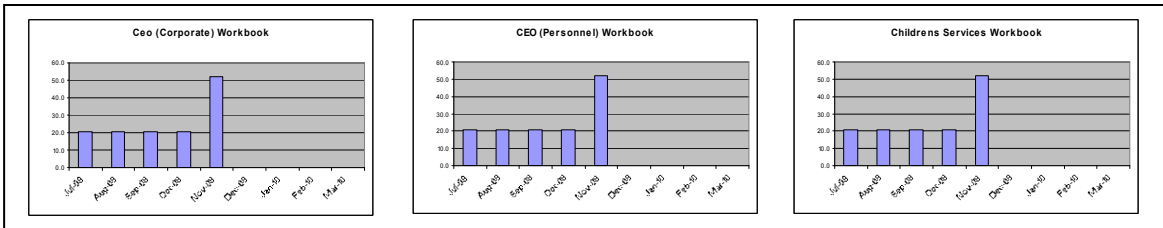
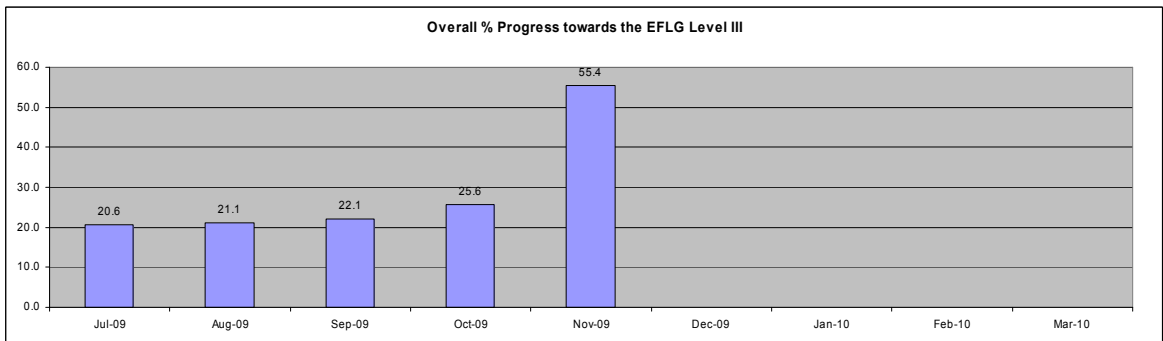
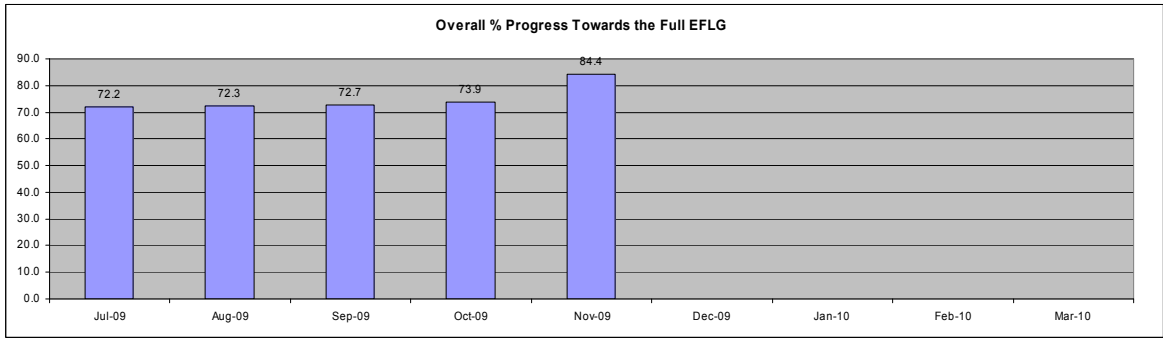
## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report will detail current progress in Sefton Council on the Equality Framework for Local Government formerly the Equality Standard.
- 1.2 Sefton Council is currently working towards the Excellent or level three of the Equality Framework that was introduced in April 2009. It is important to note this replaces the Equality Standard that previously had five levels and the Council as reported in June 2009 was nearly at level four on the Equality Standard.
- 1.2 In addition to this the report will detail the partnership approach to delivery on equality and diversity developed through the Sefton wide Single Equality Scheme in Sefton.

## **2. Current Progress on the Equality**

- 2.1 The current progress on EFECT is detailed below and is very encouraging with the Council recorded at 55% on the new EFECT performance management system for the framework. It is important to note that a great deal of the evidence currently recorded on the new performance management system is based on corporate work that has been developed and strongly supported by Sefton Equalities Partnership. The key areas of strength and areas for development are detailed beneath the graphs and the existence and delivery of equality and diversity work through the partnership is a strength within the new framework. This therefore means that achieving 60% or above of the Equality Framework Excellent level is possible by March 2010 providing individual workbook areas deliver on the actions and targets set and record the evidence in the system.

## 2.2



2.3 Equality Impact Assessments – These are required to meet the legal requirements placed on the council, but also to comply with the Equality Framework. The council has introduced revised training and a revised pro-forma for completing EIA's. This has been received positively and key areas notably Leisure and Environmental Protection have delivered a number of EIA's in the last six months. The work on this still needs to be delivered consistently across the council. This work would support improvements in performance against the Equality Framework.

2.4 Equalities Monitoring – The equalities monitoring weeks have taken place and data has been gathered from service delivery points in the council and from our partners in particular in NHS Sefton. The data is now with Tribal who are likely to report in February 2010 to ensure library data collected in a separate survey is included. This will support and develop our understanding of the people using services broken down by equality strands. This can then influence the customer contact strategy, and also improve our understanding of the local population in relation to the equality strands.

The key challenge from this years monitoring weeks will be supporting the embedding of this work in service access points in the council and across Sefton. As a result of the equalities monitoring work undertaken to date the council is in a strong position in this area of work and, providing this embedding takes place across a wider range of departments, we will be able to evidence Excellence in this area of work.

In relation to equalities monitoring of staff, consideration is being given in the council to the timing of the workforce monitoring exercise as a result of the strategic budget review. It is important to note that it is a clear requirement of the Excellent level that the staff data is regularly refreshed and progress against equality targets in the workforce is evidenced. In addition to this the council will need to deliver a staff satisfaction survey cut by the equality strands to achieve Excellence.

2.5 Equality and Diversity and Procurement / Commissioning – The council has revised its policies and procedures on procurement and equality and diversity and developed training for procurement officers so that they can deliver on these revised procedures. As these procedures are followed the council will be able to evidence Excellence in this area of work.

The Council lead officer on procurement together with SEP is currently working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and a few other partners in the North West as the work developed in Sefton has been identified as having some key strengths in relation to embedding equality and diversity into procurement.

2.6 The Corporate Equalities Group met in October to discuss structures and processes to support the council in delivering on the core

requirements in relation to equality and diversity and ensuring best practice is developed in Sefton Council and across Sefton. These revised structures with director level representation on the Corporate Equalities Group will support the Council in progressing towards Excellence by March 2011. This is the date that all councils who were recorded at level three or four of the Equality Standard are aiming to achieve the new Excellent level.

- 2.7 The revised structure will include an increased number of workbooks in Children's Services and in Chief Executives. In Children's Services this will support this directorate more effectively in recording good practice and monitoring progress on delivering real actions and change to under represented groups through monitoring and equality impact assessments. In Chief Executives this will also support effective recording of evidence and development of best practice in line with the new structures developing in the council.
- 2.8 The key challenge in progressing to Excellence in the council across all workbooks is the embedding of equality actions and target setting through the use of equality impact assessments, equalities monitoring and equalities in procurement supported by effective consultation and engagement with under represented groups. This will require strong leadership from the new directorate leaders to support consistent progress across all the workbooks on the EFECT system.

### **3. Partnership Work based on the Single Equality Scheme**

- 3.1 The council supported by the recently agreed Single Equality Scheme for Sefton can demonstrate significant areas where joint working is taking place. Currently in line with the cross cutting themes in the SES, joint work is developing with partners on :-
- Procurement / Commissioning – Partners from the NHS, health trusts, Children's Trust, Sefton Council, One Vision Housing, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire Service are working together to develop joint procedures and training which will be supported by the work developing through the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the North West conference planned for March 2010.
  - Employment / Positive Action – The above partners have met to discuss joint work to improve diversity in the workforce in Sefton and agreed the following priorities :-

a/ Sharing and improving monitoring data on the workforce in the public and community and voluntary sector in Sefton.

b/ Identify best practice e.g. fire services targeted recruitment campaigns and explore partnership response to this.

c/ Improvement and development of joint staff networks.

d/ Disability and Employment hopefully supported by the Disability and Employment project submitted to the Equality and Human Rights commission and requested to go through to the second round of bidding. This work will support best practice in relation to enabling disabled people who are work ready to enter employment.

- Community Cohesion and Hate Crime – The hate crime week for 2010 is currently being planned with a conference on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of February. This includes a presentation given by the Home office lead on hate crime.  
In addition to this SEP has secured resources through Celebr8 to support the roll out of the values statement to two more community areas and continue the work in Netherton and Peel Road/ Knowsley Road. This work will be reported as part of the North West Celebr8 programme
- A paper has been produced which will be discussed by the single equality scheme working group in December to support the development of some of the innovative consultation and engagement methods such as ‘Meet the Directors’ across all the community networks. This work will ensure there is a clear link and influence from the community networks for under represented groups on the work delivered to improve equality and diversity in service provision and employment in Sefton.

3.2 In addition to the work on cross cutting themes it is important to note that individual equality strand work is progressing and this includes :-

- Launch of the Navajo kite marking scheme to support best practice in Sefton for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in employment and who are accessing services.
- Gender Stereotyping Working Group – Developing concrete actions in schools etc. to challenge and address gender stereotypes between boys and girls and men and women.
- Support development for Black and racial / ethnic minority community groups who have recently come forward to SEP.

3.3 All the above work demonstrates positive steps forward which will directly impact on people’s lives in relation to e.g. hate crime /



employment rights / access to employment etc. for people from under represented groups in Sefton. Importantly this is being supported and will be delivered by a range of partners in Sefton which will be important as evidence for Sefton's Comprehensive Area Assessment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The above report demonstrates effective progress in a number of areas which will improve delivery on equality and diversity in Sefton. Importantly this is a combination of direct work with people living in Sefton from under represented groups and policy work which will improve access to employment and services for people from under represented groups.
- 4.2 The Council is on course to achieving the target of Excellence on the equality framework by March 2011 with the clear support and drive from senior managers and leaders in the council.

#### **6. Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities is recommended to:-
  - i) Note the positive progress made on the equality framework and the developing partnership work around the Single Equality Scheme.
  - ii) Receive updates on progress quarterly from Sefton Equalities Partnership on the Equalities Framework.