

Report to	<b>Resources &amp; Performance Committee</b>
Date	<b>9 April 2013</b>
By	<b>Director of Corporate Services</b>
Title of Report	<b>Equality and Diversity Policy</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To approve the South Downs National Park Authority Equality and Diversity Policy</b>

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to**  
**1) approve the South Downs National Park Authority Equality and Diversity Policy**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out progress that has been made in the development of an Equality and Diversity Policy for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The policy document will be supported by an Equality Impact Assessment toolkit for officers to use when assessing the equalities implications of projects.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The two principles of equality are equal treatment and equal opportunity. The general equality duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, requires local authorities to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 2.2 We need to consider the impact that our policies and actions have on the people who live and work in the South Downs area with regard to their age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2.3 Although the SDNPA has taken regard of the Equality Act 2010 in the development of its policies to date, there has been no overarching policy framework. With this in mind we sought specialist resource to guide and advise us on the development of a pragmatic and proportionate approach to meet our statutory obligations. This has included advising on and developing a policy framework and ensuring equality and diversity approaches run throughout our work as well as conducting training with officers and Members.

**3. Equality and Diversity Policy**

- 3.1 The policy document is attached as **Appendix I**. The policy represents a statement of intent by the SDNPA about its commitment to Equality and Diversity and how it

intends to ensure we meet the needs of the Act and regularly review and monitor our work.

- 3.2 It also includes information about the SDNPA approach to Equality and Diversity training for all staff and Members.

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit**

- 4.1 The policy will be supported by an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) toolkit.
- 4.2 EqIAs are designed to assist in the consideration of the three aims of the Equality Duty. EqIAs are an excellent good practice tool to help us ensure our work is non-discriminatory, and that the National Park and associated services are accessible.
- 4.3 An EqIA is designed to help determine whether an area of our activity will have a positive or negative impact on an individual or group based on the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. It is a method of ensuring that a function or policy will not create barriers which could prevent individuals accessing services or employment opportunities.
- 4.4 It is essential to understand the completion of an EqIA provides a process to assist with identifying issues and the actions required to address them.
- 4.5 The areas of activity that need to be covered include, but are not limited to:
- Policies
  - Services
  - Facilities
  - Buildings
  - Events
  - Publications and
  - Communications.
- 4.6 As functions or policies are reviewed, or new ones introduced, an EqIA should be produced. EqIAs enable us to integrate equality and diversity into our mainstream work. By taking a systematic approach we will be able to approach equality and diversity in a uniform manner and one which is understood by people who work for us or who receive our services.
- 4.7 EqIAs need to be incorporated into planned or existing processes but their use should be proportionate, i.e. not every (policy) area will require the same level of detail.

#### **5 Future reporting**

- 5.1 An annual report on learning and actions arising from the completion of EqIAs will be provided to the Joint Consultative Committee, Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Resources and Performance Committee.

#### **6 Resources**

- 6.1 Staff and members have received training on the Equality Act 2010 and what it means for the SDNPA. Further training will be provided in March/April 2013 for officers who may need to conduct EqIAs.
- 6.2 The EqIA toolkit provides the resources officers will need to conduct systematic and proportionate EqIAs.

#### **7 Risk management**

- 7.1 The development of an Equality and Diversity policy and toolkit will assist the SDNPA in managing any risks associated with meeting the Equality Act 2010.

## **8 Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety**

8.1 This policy is based upon the requirements of the latest legislation regarding equalities.

## **9 External Consultees**

9.1 None.

### **HÉLÈNE ROSSITER**

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Appendix Appendix I - E&D Policy

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive Officer, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Legal Services.