



**GENDER ACTION PLAN
LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
November 2008 – April 2011**



MAYORS FORWARD

The lives of women and men, the work they do, the income they receive, the roles that they are given and the relationships that they share are all shaped by social norms and traditions which treat women and men differently. Unfortunately the gendered responsibilities and rewards for participation in society are not only different for women and men they are usually inequitable.

Gender Equality is about providing men and women with “equal conditions for realising their full human rights and their potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit equally from their results”

Yvonne Galligan (2000)

It is my hope that through the implementation of this Gender Action Plan, Limavady Borough Council can proactively make a difference to the lives of men and women both politically and within the workplace and so ensure that all can realise their potential.

Councillor Brenda Chivers
Mayor of Limavady

CHIEF EXECUTIVES COMMENTS

Gender Equality forms an integral part of our overall Equality responsibilities. Over recent years we have demonstrated this commitment to Equality through the development and implementation of our Corporate Plan 2007 – 2009 which states our objective

“To celebrate the diversity of cultures within the Borough and to promote an ethos of equality and good relations”.

The Council’s new Corporate Plan 2009 – 2011 which is currently being developed aims to build on this strengths of he previous plan by reinforcing the Council’s desire to promote equality of opportunity and good relations, and specifically, to be a place that:

“Respects diversity in all its forms including culture, ethnicity, religion, age and gender”.

In pursuance of our corporate mission, goals and objectives, we have put in place a number of policies and strategies. These include the Council’s Equal Opportunity Policy, Equality Scheme and Good Relations Strategy 2007-2009. The development and implementation of this Gender Action Plan will enhance our commitment to promote Equality across the Council and provide a framework for us to address gender issues and ensure meaningful change within the workplace.

Liam Flanigan
Chief Executive

Introduction

Limavady Borough Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for elected members and officers of the Council.

In line with this commitment and in support of the Women in Local Councils initiative, Limavady Borough Council has developed a Gender Action Plan. The plan provides a framework to consider the key issues in respect of gender equality and complements the Councils Equality Scheme under Section 75, the Northern Ireland Act.

The Council wishes to address any gender under-representation and identify barriers which may exist. We are keen to encourage more integration of men and women into non traditional roles and ensure equality of opportunity in terms of access to all levels of employment/leadership, training and in relation to promotional opportunities. The Council specifically wishes to continue to address the lower level of female applications for management posts and the low levels of female elected members.

Limavady Borough Council will review the plan regularly with the support of the Local government Staff Commission, The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Governance of Queens University, Belfast (DemocraShe). The first review will take place by 30th April 2009 and annually thereafter.

Limavady Council will provide the appropriate resources to ensure the effective implementation of the plan. Identified targets will be incorporated into the annual business plan and progress will be reviewed by Senior Management and Council on a regular basis.

The aims of the action plans are:

1. To ensure that Council's policies and practices meet legal requirements.
2. To aim to promote best practice in relation to sex equality.
3. To address gender under representations and job segregation by;
 - Promoting sex equality
 - Developing and implementing strategies to identify and remove barriers.

The following action plans summarise the key actions adopted by the Council in pursuit of this strategy for both elected representatives and officers of the Council.

Limavady Borough Council's Gender Action Plan

Prior to creating a Gender Action Plan, Limavady Borough Council identified what action it had taken to date to address gender issues. The Council has:

- ✚ Secured Councils commitment to implement the initiative across the Council in 2006
- ✚ Secured the Chief Executives commitment to support the initiative.
- ✚ Agreed and implemented a number of policies and procedures to meet equality obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. These policies and procedures support the Councils intention to mainstream Equality as a key consideration with the organisation:
 - ✚ Corporate Plan 2007-2009
 - ✚ Equality Scheme
 - ✚ Council Policies and Procedures
 - Equal Opportunities Policy
 - Annual and Special Leave Policy
 - Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave Policy
 - Flexible Working Hours Scheme
 - Job Share Policy
 - Training and Development Policy and Procedures
 - ✚ Human Resources Integrated Business Plan
- ✚ Developed flexible working arrangements in line with legislative requirements and best practice including implementing a systematic and objective procedure for considering requests.
- ✚ Became a member of Opportunity Now

- ✚ Developed a mechanism as part of its equality mainstreaming process ensuring that all current and proposed policies are screened from an equality perspective. This, together with monitoring the effect of policies is an ongoing process.
- ✚ Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- ✚ Implemented a Wellbeing Action Plan which focused on four main areas of work, Healthy Eating and Nutrition, Physical Activity, Stress and Work/Life Balance and Raising Cancer awareness.
- ✚ Granted free membership of swimming and leisure facilities and subsidised membership of fitness suite for all employees as a health promotion initiative.
- ✚ Worked in partnership with Foyle Health @ Work to develop the Well Being programme and to provide health checks for all council employees.
- ✚ Worked in partnership with Action Cancer to provide screening for designated groups of male and female employees.
- ✚ Adopted the Declaration of Principles (Women in Local Councils Initiative). Made these available on the Councils website and internal intranet.
- ✚ Established a Gender Steering Group which has male, female and elected member representation.
- ✚ Identified a Women's Champion

GENDER ACTION PLAN – ELECTED MEMBERS

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Organisational Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Gender Action Plan for Elected Members 	Chief Executive/HRM	Nov 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annually Council’s commitment to gender equality issues across the Council. 	Chief Executive	April 09	Complete
Organisational Stock- taking and Goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish facts and figures on women politicians participation throughout Council 	CE/HRM	Dec 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult within Council 	Chief Executive	May 09	Complete review undertaken at GAG meeting in February 09
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals and timetables 	Chief Executive	May 09	
Policies, Procedures & Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council Standing Orders and Rules to ensure there are no barriers to women politicians. 	Chief Executive	Dec 08	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Gender Steering group with both representatives from officers and elected members to develop and oversee the Councils gender Action plan. 	HRM	March 07	Complete

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Implementation and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consult members on patterns of business and timings of meetings to facilitate family friendly arrangements and work/life balance. 	Chief Executive/HRM	April 10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine best practice gender equality models elsewhere 	HRM	Sept 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop good practice exchange and learning within and across Councils. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular progress reporting on action plans. 	Chief Executive	Ongoing	
Recruitment, Nomination and Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review nomination processes for Council office-holders and committees. 	Chief Executive	May 09	Complete review undertaken at GWG meeting in February 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review selection procedures for Council nominees and delegations. 	Chief Executive	May 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep under regular review the composition of Council delegations and representation on public and other bodies. 	Chief Executive	Aug 09	

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Internal and External Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underpin commitment by regular restatement at Council meetings and to the public. 	Chief Executive/ Mayor	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure regular briefings on progress on action plans and update members on new ideas. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Quarterly	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build upon external links to involve women and further promote the gender action plan. 	HRM	Ongoing	
Training and Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Council training and development strategy for councillors consider gender perspective. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Dec 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake equality awareness training and build Council capacity to fulfil plan. 	Corporate Policy Officer	Aug 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce targeted training and mentoring/shadowing to encourage participation. 	Chief Executive/HRM	April 10	
Evaluation and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and regularly review implementation of action plan, including analysis of statistical monitoring and consultation on progress. 	Chief Executive	April 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate gender equality reviews into wider Council reviews. 	Chief Executive	Ongoing	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress against goals and targets and provide rationale for results. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Oct 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refocus action plan to improve results as necessary. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Oct 09	

GENDER ACTION PLAN – OFFICERS

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Organisational Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Gender Action Plan for Officers. 	Chief Executive/HRM	Nov 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Gender Plan into Corporate aims and culture 	Chief Executive	Nov 08	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annually Council's Commitment to gender 	Chief Executive/HRM	April 09	Complete
Organisational Stock-taking and Goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor gender representation in employment including employees, applicants, appointees, promotees, leavers and contact workers. Using the agreed template 	HRM	March 07	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify barriers within the workplace. 	HRM	June 09	Work life balance survey to be completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop appropriate positive action measures 	HRM	July 09	completed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals and timetables. 	HRM	July 09	and reviewed August 2009
Policies, Procedures and Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council's Equal Opportunities and Harassment Policies and Procedures from a gender perspective with particular attention to new and impending legislative changes. 	HRM	Aug 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all employment policies and develop a programme of review from a gender perspective. 	HRM	Dec 08	Complete

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Implementation and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and develop flexible working arrangements in line with legislative requirements and best practice. • Implement a systematic and objective procedure for considering flexible working requests to ensure equality of access to flexible working. • Develop booklet with further guidelines and details for employees • Examine best practice gender equality models elsewhere • Examine the opportunity to develop a mentoring programme for female employees • Participate in Opportunity Now benchmarking survey • Review requirements of Employer of Choice Programme 	<p>SMT/SMG/HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p>	<p>April 09</p> <p>April 08</p> <p>Sept 09</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jan 09</p> <p>Sept 09</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
Recruitment, Nomination and Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recruitment and selection policy and procedures • Provide refresher training on recruitment and selection for all senior officers 	<p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p>	<p>April 10</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Internal and External Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate leadership and commitment to gender equality in articulation of Council's corporate aims and culture. • Ensure regular briefings on progress on action plans and update staff on new developments. • Build upon external links to further promote the gender action plan. 	<p>Chief Executive/ SMT/ SMG</p> <p>Chief Executive/ Corporate Briefings</p> <p>HRM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Bi-monthly</p> <p>April 09</p>	
Training and Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council training and development strategy from gender perspective. • Undertake equality awareness training and build Officer capacity to fulfil plan. • Introduce targeted training and mentoring/ shadowing to encourage development. • Examine best practice models elsewhere. • Identify the opportunity to coordinate a development event either within LBC or with the Cluster Councils 	<p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p> <p>HRM</p>	<p>Aug 09</p> <p>Dec 09</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 09</p>	<p>Complete</p>

Action	Indicators	Responsibility	By When	Update
Evaluation and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and regularly review implementation of action plan, including analysis of statistical monitoring and consultation on progress. • Review progress against goals and targets and provide rationale for results. • Refocus action plan to improve results as necessary. 	<p>Gender Steering Group</p> <p>Chief Executive/ SMT /SMG</p> <p>Chief Executive/ SMT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Oct 09</p>	