

Appendix B

An equal opportunities budget has for some time been held in Human Resources. This dates back to 2003, when the Council employed a Personnel Officer (Equalities and Improvement). Because of difficulties in recruiting to the post, the Personnel Committee on the 20th April 2004 deleted it from the Council's establishment, resulting in a saving of £12,000 in 2004/05. Of that saving, £4000 was used to regrade the then Policy Officer post in Corporate Strategy. The remaining £8000 was transferred to the equal opportunities budget which then stood at £11,000. In March 2005, the Personnel Committee approved the transfer of £10,000 from that budget to fund a restructure of Human Resources, and the balance was merged into the HR Management and Administration Sundry Expenses budget. In 2006/07 an Equality and Diversity Budget of £1000 was created, and this was increased to £4,000 in 2007/08. The 2006/07 sum was unspent and was carried forward into 2007/08. There is likely to be a further carry forward request to 2008/09, but there is nothing in this budget for any future years.

The effect of the Personnel Committee decision in 2005 was that the HR staffing budget includes £10,000 towards equality work.

The Senior Human Resources Officer is due to return from maternity leave in August 2008, and has requested that, on her return, she be permitted to work three days a week rather than full time. This would give a saving of £10,550 in 2008/09. Whilst she has indicated that this would be a permanent arrangement, under council policy she would have the option to revert to full time working, so this saving cannot be guaranteed on a permanent basis. However, the saving could be used for the time being to contribute towards the funding of a Community Cohesion Officer as proposed below. This would consolidate the staffing resource for the wider aspects of equality and diversity in that post, although clearly Human Resources would retain responsibility for equality issues relating to the Council's employees.