

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE &  
FINANCE SCRUTINY  
SUB-COMMITTEE**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 11 December, 2017
<b>Subject:</b>	Annual Equalities Report 2016/17
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member area:</b>	Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Performance Lead Member for Corporate Resources & Councillor Stephen Wright, Policy Lead Member for Corporate Resources
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Enclosures:</b>	N/A

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This Report highlights the Council's performance and work towards advancing equality of opportunity, and helps evaluate the equality of service provision. It also considers whether that work is benefitting local communities in Harrow and looks at ways work has been undertaken to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between the different communities that make up Harrow.

### **Recommendations:**

To approve the report for publication.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction**

Harrow prides itself in being one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse Boroughs in the country with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. The aim of this report is to ensure that the Council operates a robust approach to the governance and mainstreaming equality and diversity across the organisation.

Being the diverse borough that it is, it is important to recognise and celebrate the good work that is being done across the Council to further equality and to celebrate the Borough's diversity. The Report highlights the achievements to be proud of, which build on a firm commitment to promote fairness and diversity, as outlined in Harrow's Corporate Plan. The Report also looks to highlight our continued commitment to maintaining and building on our strengths by ensuring equality and diversity are integral to everything we do.

Work to ensure equalities is embedded into all Council work is done by The Corporate Equalities Group (CEG), which is chaired by a number of Corporate Directors. This group provides senior leadership and strategic direction for developing and implementing excellent equality, diversity, cohesion and human rights policy development, practice and service delivery. The CEG works in collaboration with its partners to establish the business case for the equalities agenda in terms of service improvement, user involvement and customer satisfaction; and monitors equalities outcomes and progress. Each Directorate has in place a Directorate Equality Task Groups (DETGs) which forms a link between the CEG and Directorates. As well as playing a key role in championing equality, diversity and inclusion, promoting good practice on equality and diversity with regards to employment and service delivery, ETGs are tasked with ensuring that corporate equality commitments and objectives are translated into action.

The Report provides you with details of the progress we are making in achieving our equality objectives and our ambition towards this for the year ahead.

There are no additional implications on resourcing or cost.

### **Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Equality Act contains a range of rights, powers and obligations to help the advancement of equality. Section 149 of the Act details the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, 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
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED covers Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality) Religion or Belief (includes lack of belief), Sex and Sexual Orientation; it also applies to Marriage and Civil Partnership but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The PSED is supported by specific duties which are intended to help public authorities to meet their requirements, and we are required to (1) publish (by the 31 January each year) information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty; and (2) prepare and publish equality objectives by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter.

### **Collate and Publish Equalities Information**

In order to meet the first requirement of the PSED, a number of local authorities choose to publish spreadsheets containing equalities data about their service users and workforce, whilst others continue to publish their annual equality in employment report relating to their workforce and Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) (as required prior to the introduction of the PSED). Although both of these approaches meet the requirements of the legislation, the Council took the decision to publish its equalities data in a more meaningful way.

In order to ensure that the data published is easy to understand and transparent, the Council has published equalities information and data in the form of a **narrative annual report**. The report highlights the projects delivered by the Council which not only support the corporate priorities, but address inequality, advances equality of opportunity and fosters good relations. The document includes **case studies of service users** and is supported by a set of data.

In 2012, the Equality and Human Rights Commission undertook a review of how public services generally complied with the requirement to publish data, and referenced Harrow Council as a best practice example in terms of the transparency and ease of access to the data that we provided. This year's compilation is available together with the data it supports at

## **Developing and Publishing Equality Objectives**

In order to meet the second requirement of the PSED, equality objectives were developed, based on the research and consultation undertaken and all available equalities information and data. The draft equality objectives were the subject of public consultation including (1) an online questionnaire for staff and elected members; (2) a questionnaire for members of the public, service users, voluntary and community groups, partners, stakeholders and the Residents' Panel; (3) workshops for staff and voluntary and community groups, partners and stakeholders; and (4) a cross party briefing was held for elected members. The consultation produced support for the equality objectives which were adopted by Cabinet in April 2012, and reviewed by Cabinet in January 2017.

## **Measuring Performance against Corporate Equality Objectives**

Directorates produce quarterly progress reports against their directorate scorecards for the Improvement Boards, which form the basis of annual progress reports. This has ensured the objectives are embedded within existing processes and service plans.

## **Financial Implications**

Any costs are managed within existing budgets.

## **Performance Issues**

**How the Council performs against the Corporate Equality Objectives is monitored via the Council's Improvement Boards and reported to Cabinet in the Strategic Performance Report.**

## **Environmental Impact**

There are none specific to this report.

## **Risk Management Implications**

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

## **Equalities implications**

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

This is an Annual Equalities report, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the current state of equalities practice in the Council and in the community.

## Council Priorities

### Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

This Report contributes towards all Council priorities:

- Build a better Harrow
- Be more business-like and business-friendly
- Protect the most vulnerable and support families

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not Required

<b>Ward Councillors notified:</b>	<b>NO</b>
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

**Contact:** Shumailla Dar, Policy Officer, ext. 2820

**Background Papers:** List **only non-exempt** documents (ie not Private and Confidential/Part II documents) relied on to a material extent in preparing the report (eg previous reports). Where possible also include a web link to the documents.