

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND  
FINCANCE SCRUTINY  
SUB- COMMITTEE**

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**Date of Meeting:** Monday 23 July, 2018

**Subject:** Annual Equalities Report 2017/18

**Responsible Officer:** Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director,  
Strategic Commissioning

**Scrutiny Lead  
Member area:** Councillor Ghazanfar Ali  
Councillor Pritesh Patel

**Exempt:** No

**Wards affected:** All

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1 - Annual Equalities Report  
2017/18

## **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 assess our performance against our Corporate Equality Objectives via a basket of indicators and case studies and includes this year the annual equalities data for the Council and the borough. The report provides details of the progress we are making in achieving our equality objectives. It illustrates the wide range of work carried out by the Council to promote inclusion, cohesion, fairness and justice and sets out our suggested priority actions for the year ahead.

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 and build on the commitment to promote fairness and diversity, as outlined in Harrow's Corporate Plan.

Work to ensure equalities is embedded into all Council work is overseen by the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG), which is chaired by the Interim Chief Executive. This group provides senior leadership and strategic direction for our work on equality and diversity and oversees the delivery of the Equalities Action Plan. Each Directorate has a Directorate Equality Task Group (DETGs) which forms a link between the CEG and Directorates. As well as playing a 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.

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**

We continue to review how we publish annual equalities data. In response to feedback from officers, the data and format we intend to publish on 2017/18 is included in this report and this year covers data on the nine protected characteristics in Harrow as well as a narrative around some of the key drivers of inequality in Harrow. This can then be compiled once a year and used numerous times by officers for the strategic context for key strategies (such as the Harrow Ambition Plan and the Community Safety Plan) and in the drafting of equality impact assessments and by partners to developing projects and funding bids. Unfortunately due to capacity restraints at the start of the year we had to prioritise other work around equalities, particularly our work on mental health and disability, which has meant that we have missed the deadline for publishing the data for this year. The data for 2017/18 will be published by the end of July, after the P&F meeting.

Our intention is that for 2018/19, now we have a new format, the data will be updated as part of the Harrow Ambition Plan process and therefore be able to be published by the 31<sup>st</sup> January deadline. The annual equalities report will then come to P&F in February, enabling P&F the opportunity to shape the Corporate Equalities Action Plan for the year ahead based on the data published at the end of January.

### **Developing and Publishing Equality Objectives**

Our Corporate Equality Objectives were last reviewed in 2016 and were agreed by Cabinet in March 2016. They are:

- An inclusive workforce that feels valued, respected and reflects our community

- An improved understanding of our communities to ensure services are fair, equitable and accessible to all and reduce inequality
- Promote and celebrate the diversity of our borough and foster community cohesion

We are not proposing any changes to the Corporate Equality Objectives for 2018/19 and they will next be reviewed by March 2020 at the latest.

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

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

CEG receives a quarterly progress report on the Corporate Equalities Action plan.

### **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> NO
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### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Fola Irikefe, Policy Officer, Tel: 020 8420 9389 Ext: 6333

**Background Papers:** None