

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting: | 15 th March 2012 |
| Subject: | Corporate Equality Objectives |
| Responsible Officer: | Paul Najsarek – Corporate Director: Community Health and Wellbeing Tom Whiting – Assistant Chief Executive |
| Scrutiny Lead Member area: | All |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1 – Summary of progress and achievements made against the SES Action Plan Appendix 2 – Equality of Opportunity Policy Appendix 3 - Equality Objectives |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out a summary of the progress and achievements made against our Single Equalities Scheme (SES) Action Plan and sets out the proposed Corporate ‘Equality Objectives’ which are a requirement of the new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) introduced by the Equality Act 2010.

It also sets out the review of Equality of Opportunity policy in light of the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- note the progress made against the Single Equalities Scheme action plan (Appendix 1);
- comment on the proposed Equality Objectives; and
- comment on the draft Equality of Opportunity policy (Appendix 2).

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

Harrow is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse boroughs in London with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. It is the richness of this diversity, and the positive impact that it has on the borough and our community, that we believe helps make Harrow such a great place to live, work and visit. We know that the borough's diversity is something to value and encourage and this report highlights our commitment to maintaining and building on our strengths by ensuring equality and diversity is integral to everything we do.

Our diverse population generates a range of needs and expectations all of which the Council needs to understand in order to provide appropriate services. As resources become scarcer, it is even more important to understand the community, their needs and aspirations and to be able to get necessary changes in services right first time.

Summary of our progress and some of the achievements made against the SES Action Plan

On the 15th December 2010, Cabinet agreed our second Single Equalities Scheme (SES) which was a requirement of the previous Race, Disability and Gender Public Sector Equality Duties (PSEDs).

The Scheme provides a context within which the detailed requirements of the various duties will be addressed. It sets the framework for the Council's equalities approach that, together with the programme of equality impact assessments and other specific actions, will fulfil the Council's responsibilities as well as engendering a positive and holistic response to equalities issues.

The SES has a three year action plan with six key objectives and a summary of the progress and achievements made against this can be found in Appendix 1.

Equality Impact Assessments

In developing our SES, we carried out a comprehensive review assessing all our functions, services and policies for relevance to the previous Equality Duties but also extending this to age, religion or belief and sexual orientation to develop a programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's).

As part of the Commissioning Panel process in 2011, each proposal was supported by an Initial Equality Impact Assessment which were considered by the Panel as part of the decision making process.

Equality Act 2010

On 8 April 2010 the Equality Bill received Royal Assent and became the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act contains a range of new rights, powers and obligations to help the drive towards equality. The Act aims to strengthen and simplify the equality law that is already in place, such as the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new 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; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED is supported by specific duties which are intended to help public authorities to meet the requirements of the PSED. Public authorities covered by the specific duties are required to:

- 1 publish by the 31st January 2012 information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty; and
- 2 prepare and publish by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter one or more equality objectives.

The new PSED replaces the previous three Public Sector Equality Duties – for race, disability and gender and now covers the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion or Belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Collate and Publish Equalities Information

In order to meet the first requirement of the PSED, a number of local authorities have published spreadsheets containing equalities data on their service users and workforce, whilst others have agreed to continue to publish their annual equality in employment report relating to their workforce and Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs) as required by the previous duties.

Although this approach meets the requirements, the Council decided to publish its equalities data in a more constructive way.

In order to ensure the data published is easy to understand and achieve transparency on our progress in addressing inequality and delivering services reflective of the needs of our community, we prepared and published our equalities information/data in the form of a document 'Our Harrow, Our Story' on the 30th January 2012 which is available on our website (link below).

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/2542/public_sector_equality_duty-equalities_datainformation

This is a narrative of the services and projects being delivered by the Council which not only support our Corporate Priorities but address inequality, advance equality and foster good relations. The documentary includes real life case studies of service users and is supported by a set of Appendices which hold the data.

Developing and Publishing Equality Objectives

In order to meet the second requirement of the PSED, our proposed 'Equality Objectives' have been developed based on the research and consultation undertaken in producing our Single Equality Scheme (SES) as well as the equalities information/data being published to satisfy the first requirement of the PSED. They have also been reviewed by the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG).

Consultation

The draft Equality Objectives were subject to a public consultation for six weeks from the 24th January to 4th March 2012.

This included an online questionnaire for staff and elected members and a separate questionnaire for members of the public, service users, voluntary and community groups, partners and stakeholders and the questionnaire was also sent out to the Residents Panel. As part of the consultation workshops for staff and voluntary and community groups, partners and stakeholders also took place. A cross party briefing was also held for elected members.

Internally, the consultation and staff workshop was publicised through The Grapevine, Members Information Bulletin, directorate newsletters, and the intranet and via Directorate Equality Task Groups. Externally, the publicity included a Press Release, emails to voluntary and community groups, via Harrow Equalities Centre, organisations on the Community Development Database and various service user databases.

The analysis of the consultation will be available at the meeting.

Corporate Equality Objectives

The proposed Corporate 'Equality Objectives' are:

1. Protect vulnerable people from the harmful impact of crime, anti-social behaviour and abuse
2. Celebrate the diversity of Harrow so the Borough is an increasingly cohesive place where people from all communities get on well together
3. Develop a workforce that feels valued, respected and is reflective of the diverse communities we serve
4. Deliver services which are accessible and welcoming to all communities and are capable of responding to the different needs and aspirations our customers have

5. Improve opportunities for vulnerable young people through our corporate parenting role and individual support
6. Minimise the impact on health inequalities and deprivation in the Borough through partnership working
7. Minimise the impact of budget cuts on equality groups (protected characteristics)
8. Support local businesses and residents in times of economic hardship

These 'Equality Objectives' will replace our SES.

Reviewing Equality of Opportunity Policy

Our last Equal Opportunities policy was adopted in June 2002. Instead of reviewing this as a stand alone policy, it was incorporated into our SES in 2010. As our 'Equality Objectives' will replace the SES, the Council will require a new Equality of Opportunity policy to reflect all the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

The revised Equality of Opportunity policy reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and was subject to internal consultation including staff, elected Members, staff support groups and the Trade Unions.

The Equality of Opportunity policy (Appendix 2) will be presented to Cabinet for approval on the 4th April 2012 together with our Corporate 'Equality Objectives'

Financial Implications

The 'Equality Objectives' support the Council's Corporate Priorities and the progress will be measured against existing priorities and measures from directorate scorecards. Therefore Directorates are not being asked to undertake any additional work and should not face any financial implications, over and above existing activity in this area.

Performance Issues

The 'Objectives' support the Council's Corporate Priorities and the progress will be measured against existing measures from directorate scorecards. The measures used to monitor our performance against the Equality Objectives will be identified through the service planning process. Directorates have been asked to highlight which measures from their directorate scorecards will help to achieve the set objectives.

In line with the existing performance process, directorates will produce quarterly progress reports against their directorate scorecards for the Improvement Boards. These will then be forwarded to the Policy Officer for Equalities and Diversity to produce annual progress reports for the Corporate Equalities Group, CSB, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet.

This will not only mainstream equalities within existing processes and service plans but also adhere to the COUNT (collate once use numerous times) framework.

Although the objectives being proposed will be reviewed every four years as required by the PSED, the targets and performance measures to achieve these objectives will be reviewed and set on an annual basis within our service planning cycle.

Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts of this decision.

Risk Management Implications

There are no direct risk management implications of this decision.

Equalities implications

An Initial Equality Implication Assessment has been completed and no adverse impact has been identified. The 'Equality Objectives' will actually address inequality, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Corporate Priorities

The proposed 'Equality Objectives' support all the Council's Corporate Priorities as illustrated in Appendix 3.

Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mohammed Ilyas, Policy Officer Equality and Diversity Ext. 2322

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1 – Summary of progress and achievements made against the SES Action Plan

Develop a modern and diverse workforce to reflect the community we serve

- Produced and published our Annual Equality in Employment report for 2010/11. For the first time, this included the monitoring of agency workers.
- The proportion of employees from (Black and Asian Minority Ethnic) BAME for 2010/11 has increased to 34.92%, compared to the 2009/10 figures (34.13%)
- Maintained our commitment to Job Centre Plus' Positive about Disabled People incentive
- 50% of middle managers have completed the online Equality Impact Assessment training
- Equality Impact Assessment training delivered to all Members of Cabinet in March and October 2011
- Developed and implemented a suite of Equality and Diversity training which included:
- Delivered two half day sessions on Diversity and Cultural Awareness training through a theatrical company looking at potential barriers and discrimination in frontline services which was attended by 48 employees.
 - Two half day Disability Equality training for employees delivered through our contract with Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD);
 - Since April 2011, we have delivered 3 half day Equality Impact Assessment training sessions and 21 people have attended
 - Since April 2011, 45 people attended other corporate Equality & Diversity training.
 - Developed a suite of online Equality and Diversity training for staff
- Delivered a Management Development Foundation programme for middle managers – 40% of those who attended were BAME
- The Council ran four day Springboard programme for a personal and work development programme for women in non- management roles each year from 2007 to 2010. The programme is aimed at women who want to improve their current positions, or progress to next step in their career. A total of 75 women attended the programme over the 4 years of which 49% were BAME.

Improve the data the council has on its residents and service users so all decisions can be taken and services developed in light of strong intelligence

- Produced and published Harrow Vitality Profile which included 80 indicators providing intelligence on our community
- Developed a new corporate guidance on Equality Monitoring to ensure consistency and improve the collation of data on our staff and service users
- Undertaken a Test of Relevance against the requirements of the new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to identify functions and services to monitor and collate data for
- Revised the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which will be agreed and published this year

- Update the profile of our housing tenants to improve knowledge of our customer base
- Harrow Informed, the Local Information System is going live in April 2012. It has national statistics about Harrow and comparative information with reference to London & England. It adds value as allows officers, organisations & individuals to evidence base their needs analyses, strategies, funding bids and local knowledge from consistent sources. For 2012/13 the Corporate Performance Team will be working with directorates to see what local service information is available to further enhance the system.
- Produced and published 'Our Harrow, Our Story' document to comply with the requirements of the PSED

Ensure that residents, service users and employees can influence decisions through effective communication and engagement

- Established Harrow Equalities Centre which is a voluntary organisation which aims to work with all sectors in promoting, implementing and monitoring equalities.
- Reviewed membership of the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG) to ensure it is representative of all employee support groups and community organisations. The group is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the Council's obligations to and opportunities for promoting equalities, embedding and mainstreaming equalities and diversity across the organisation.
- Reviewed membership of Residents Panel to ensure it reflects the community of the Borough
- Developed and support a strong active Youth Parliament.
- Established sub group of Adults Services Consultation Steering Group to develop EqIAs for all projects included in the Adults Transformation Programme.
- Established up a multi agency steering group representative of all service users to assist in the development and delivery of the Universal Information and Advice Strategy
- Reviewed the Tenants and Leaseholders Consultative Forum (TLCF) and Harrow Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (HFTRA) to ensure it is reflective of the service users
- In 2009, the Council established a Disability Forum consisting mostly of people with a disability to advise on policy development and review. The Forum has the ability to comment on emerging policies and have their views reported to the Cabinet.
- The Council was involved in setting up Harrow Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Forum to represent the needs and views of LGBT people and provide services to this, often hard to reach, community. The forum is engaged in the development of policies and services and worked in partnership with the Council to organise an event to mark International Day Against Homophobia in 2010.
- The Council supported the creation of Harrow Senior Residents Assembly (HSRA) to replace two previous organisations representing older people in Harrow. The new organisation is volunteer led and contributes the views and needs of older people on policy and service developments.
- Let's Talk Campaign – the first focused on our vision and priorities which included Five Road shows in district centres and Harrow Town Centre, ten open days at venues across the Borough, a Residents' Panel consultation, an online survey, a Harrow Strategic Partnership Summit, events held with Service Users, as well as setting up a facebook page. The second campaign focused on cultural, leisure and parks and open spaces usage.
- We were the first London Local Authority to launch a dedicated youth website to empower young people to access local services.

- Developed and launched new Equality and Diversity web pages on The HUB and the Council's website
- Launched 'Equality Matters' a quarterly newsletter for staff and members
- Regular member updates via the members Information Bulletin
- Continued to produce and publish Harrow People magazine for the residents of Harrow
- Continued to produce and publish Homing In magazine which is distributed widely to all tenants
- Continued to publish the Chief Executives newsletter

Deliver responsive services, improve customer care and increase customer satisfaction

- Reviewed our debt management process to ensure consideration of service user needs (in particular the process for home care clients)
- Our reablement service, which offers an intensive care package to help residents recover quicker after an accident, illness or referral for social care, has recorded extraordinary results in its first year in operation. Figures from the first year show expected savings of £350,000. Around 70% of those requesting support go on to need no long term social care. Our reablement service has also received the praise from residents and has had 5,000 recipients in the first year. Of those receiving intensive support since November 2011, 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the services
- NAS accreditation - Roxborough Park is a community based residential care service, registered with the Care Quality Commission and run by the council, to provide services to people with multiple disabilities. It is an excellent service and has received, following an assessment process, a full accreditation status from the National Autistic Society on 16 June 2011. This is a big achievement as it is one of the few accredited homes in London.
- As of 23 Feb 2011, 38.2% of clients received a personal budget which exceeds our target of 30%
- Continued to provide support to housebound residents through the House bound library service.
- Continued to provide a Meals on Wheels service which delivers approx 300 hot meals 365 days of the year to, mainly, older disabled people. The service provides meals that meet religious and dietary requirements e.g. Halal, Kosher, African-Caribbean, Gujarati and vegetarian.
- Completed a review of cemeteries to make them more accessible to allow weekend burials.
- Completed a review of all polling stations to ensure they are accessible and DDA complaint
- Adults and Housing produced an older people's handbook, which provides information about services, health and well being to promote independence, choice and flexibility.
- Adopted Accessible Homes Supplementary Planning Document requiring new residential development to be built to lifetime and wheelchair homes standard.
- Developed a partnership with Coram to provide high quality placements for Children Looked After (CLA)
- Developed a teenage placement commissioning strategy to target our most vulnerable young people to provide support and stability.
- Provide respite care for carers of children with disabilities.
- Successfully implemented "Aiming high" for disabled children and offering increased respite care.
- Developed a successful Children's Centre programme to cater for the needs of the diverse community in each area.

Reduce inequalities through corporate commitment and partnership working

- Secured funding to support workless parents and those on household incomes below £20K per annum into sustainable employment.
- Funded workshops for voluntary sector groups on support available to the communities they represent during the recession
- Worked with various voluntary organisations to improve benefit take up amongst older people. Between Jan and Dec 2009 this included reviewing the benefits eligibility of 2872 individuals resulting in a £4.4m in additional benefit take up.
- Funded Harrow in Business to provide training to unemployed residents wishing to set up their own businesses
- Delivery of Future Job Fund to provide work for long term unemployed young people into work.
- In May 2009 a project was delivered jointly by Harrow Council and PAIWAND (An Afghan community association specialising in running Supplementary Schools) aiming to establish and successfully run a weekend school for 50-60 disadvantaged children from Harrow studying at Key Stage 1 and 2. The young people assisted all met the national 'narrowing the gap' definition of disadvantage. The project successfully surpassed its original target of 60 and currently supports about 100 children from the targeted groups, with a further 40 identified by schools on the waiting list. Initial results show that virtually all children have made progress including, moving up sets, and parents have commented that children are catching up or have caught up with their peers.

Promote diversity and community cohesion both within the council and the borough

- Under One sky – since 2005, we have delivered Under One sky is the Council's largest single event in the annual calendar. This is a fun-filled family event, which provides something for everyone, and clearly demonstrates how well different communities in Harrow integrate with one another.
- In celebration of Harrow's multicultural community, the council in partnership with the Harrow Interfaith Council launched an Open Faith Weekend in November 2009. Participating places of worship opened their doors to the wider public to promote a better understanding of their faith. As a first event of its kind, 15 places of worship participated. This followed a successful evening event with representatives from nine faiths in an open discussion question and answer forum with attendance of nearly 100.
- Support the Harrow Black History Month Forum to develop and implement a programme of events to mark Black History Month each year
- Celebrated International Women's Day in March 2010
- In partnership with the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Forum, Metropolitan Police, Harrow Hate Crime Forum, Harrow Police and Community Consultative Group and North West Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Forum held a film showing for employees, elected members, partners and members of the public to mark International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) in May 2010
- In partnership with Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), the Council marked International Day of People with Disabilities on 3 December 2010, with a community information and advice event at the Civic Centre. This included stalls and advice from the Council's Benefits Team, Safeguarding Adults, services for Children with Disabilities, Age Concern Harrow, DisabledGo, MIND, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Harrow Crossroads and Cool 2 Care.
- As part of National Carers Week, Harrow Council in partnership with voluntary organisations and carers from across the borough organised a range of events to raise the profile of carers living and working in Harrow.

The Neighbourhood Champions scheme successfully launched two years ago and has continued to go from strength to strength with more than 1000 Champions registered and on board.