

Supplementary Committee Agenda



Governance Select Committee Tuesday, 5th April, 2016

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.15 pm

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins
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7. PROPOSED EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2016-2020 (Pages 3 - 16)

(Director of Governance) Report to follow.

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Report to Governance Select Committee



SCRUTINY



Date of meeting: 5 April 2016

Portfolio: Governance and Development Management (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Equality Objectives 2016-2020

Responsible Officer: Barbara Copson (01992 564042)

Democratic Services Officer: M Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations required:

- (1) To consider the Council's Equality Objectives 2016-2020; and
- (2) That the Council's Equality Objectives 2016-2020 be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

Executive Summary:

The Council is required to publish equality objectives every four years to take forward its public sector equality duty. This duty requires that we proactively consider how discrimination can be addressed through the work that we do, and also whether we can advance equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between different protected groups. The setting of objectives provides a focus on the outcomes to be achieved during the next four years.

In 2012 the Council adopted equality objectives which reach the end of their lifespan in March 2016. New objectives have been developed to take the Council up to April 2020, and because the objectives must be specific and measurable, an action plan has been developed to deliver them.

Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the adoption of the proposed equality objectives and action plan for 2016-2020.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The setting of equality objectives every four years is required of public bodies under the Equality Act 2010. It is therefore, a key statutory duty that the objectives are set and published, together with the ongoing progress to achieve them.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could decide not to adopt one or more of the proposed objectives, or to adopt alternative objectives. However there is no alternative option to the setting and publishing of one or more equality objective for the period 2016-2020.

Report:

1. In March 2012 the Council published its first set of equality objectives designed to provide focus for the Council's work to deliver its public sector equality duty, and thereby advance equality for service users and employees. The duty requires public authorities to at all times have due regard to the following three aims:
 - 1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - 2) to advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
 - 3) to foster good relations between different groups;

and the objectives set met one or more of these aims and were designed to help the Council to fulfill that duty. This first set of four objectives targeted:

- 1) equality intelligence gathering and the use of that intelligence in service planning;
- 2) the development of equality ownership;
- 3) improving engagement activities; and
- 4) work to allow for a balanced workforce profile.

An action plan to deliver the objectives was adopted, which, as a working document, was subject to further development as the work progressed over its four year lifespan. The progress of work to deliver the action plan has been coordinated by the Corporate Equality Working Group (CEWG), chaired by the Director of Governance, and reported to Management Board and the Governance Select Committee at 6 monthly intervals. The lifespan of these objectives comes to an end in March 2016, and over their lifespan, considerable progress has been made and the objectives have been largely achieved.

2. Over the last year the CEWG has been engaged in the development of a new set of objectives to take the Council forward until March 2020. Whilst the number of objectives the Council must adopt is not prescribed in the legislation, like all equality work, the number and focus must be reasonable and proportionate to the size of the organisation and its functions.
3. This new set of objectives is designed to address the challenges still faced by the Council to embed equality into all its activities and seeks to build upon the progress already achieved. Evidence to support the identification of themes for objectives was scoped, together with feedback from CEWG representatives and a review of work to date. The draft action plan, attached at Appendix A, also seeks to help to deliver the Council's Key Objectives and Transformation Programme, where relevant.
4. The CEWG has consulted with directorates at all stages of the development of the objectives and action plan, and Management Board and Governance Select Committee at key stages of their development. Procurement Steering Group has been consulted in relation to objective 2. Four objectives are proposed and are set out below together with a brief outline of the reasons for their proposal:

Objective 1: To integrate the Council's public sector equality duty into our partnership working

The public sector equality duty is relevant across the full range of its activity including its work through partnerships. The duty also applies to its public sector partners and it may be the Council can access good practice or share work to comply with the duty.

Objective 2: To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management

Procurement by local authorities is identified by the government as a key area for the development of equality and where there is the potential to improve the lives of people. Whilst it is evident there is some consideration of equality in our procurement practices,

procurement has not been a focus for equality work to date, and integration is required if the duty is to be fully met.

Objective 3: To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans

Employee understanding of Council requirements remains important. Whilst some progress has been made in the course of the current set of objectives, the CEWG considers there is the potential to refine and refocus training for employees to reflect the Council's current position.

Objective 4: To improve and develop equality in our business activities

This includes projects and reviews, and along with Objectives 1 and 2, seeks to build on progress already made in integrating equality into service planning and delivery, and extend it into our wider activities, and at an earlier stage of our investigation and research.

5. The Council is subject to a further duty to publish equality information annually to show progress against the public sector equality duty, and progress against the equality objectives action plan forms part of this information. We are also required to understand the impact of our services and activities on people from the protected groups and a separate programme of analysis runs alongside and will inform the work contained in this action plan.
6. Whilst there is no obligation to produce an equality scheme, CEWG considers it a useful way of communicating the Council's intentions and approach to this area of work. It is intended that subsequent to the adoption of a new set of equality objectives, the existing scheme will be reviewed and updated to reflect them.
7. The Cabinet is requested to consider and agree the proposed equality objectives for 2016-2020, and action plan to deliver them subject to the views of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 April 2016.

Resource Implications:

The achievement of the Council's corporate equality responsibilities in relation to the proposed objectives can be met from existing resources.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The adoption of equality objectives to progress the public sector equality duty is in compliance with The Equality Act 2010.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None relating to this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to deliver specific equality objectives for 2016-20, will be identified by the responsible service director.

Consultation Undertaken:

Directorates at key stages of objective identification and development
Management Board 13 May 2015 and 4 November 2015
Governance Select Committee 7 July 2015 and 1 December 2015
Procurement Steering Group 4 February 2016

Background Papers:

Equality Objectives 2012-16
Management Board reports 2 March 2016, 13 May 2015 and 4 November 2015

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

None arising from this report. Relevant risk management issues arising from actions to achieve specific equality objectives will be identified by the responsible service director

Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016-2020

Objective 1: To integrate the Council's public sector equality duty into our partnership working

Ref	Action	Measures (measurable outcome)	Responsibility	Milestones	Deadline
1.	Include the Council's equality requirements in terms of reference or service level agreement as appropriate, of <i>new</i> partnerships.	Partnerships which take forward the Council's equality duty	Senior Performance Improvement Officer	Include as a requirement in business plan guidance	March 2017
			All Directors	EFDC equality requirements included in governance arrangements of new partnerships	March 2020

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2.	Reflect the Council's public sector equality duty in governance documentation relating to partnerships listed in the Corporate Community Partnerships Register	The basis and mandate for the inclusion of the public sector equality duty in our work with partner organisations	All Directors with partnership responsibility	Review governance documents of partnerships listed in the Corporate Community Partnerships Register: to establish inclusion of the Council's public sector equality duty	March 2017
				For partnerships not already reflecting the public sector equality duty in governance arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the partnership governance arrangements review process and review opportunity; implement inclusion 	Sept 2018 March 2020
3.	Include equality outcomes as a criterion in the community grant allocation process	Grant provision which addresses inequality	Communities (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety)	Draft criteria produced and considered by O&S Task and Finish Group and Cabinet	March 2017
				Criteria adopted and implemented	March 2017

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4.	Each directorate to be responsible for organising the programme of work experience for 3 young people each year 2016-2020	Young people are helped to acquire the skills and access to work	Resources (HR officers to coordinate) / All Directors	HR to work with Directorates to help develop relevant programmes	August 2016
				Directorates develop and implement programme	September – August each year from September 2016
5.	Work with partners to help older people to reduce the impacts of isolation as identified in the Impact of the Aging population Study	Reduce isolation in rural locations	Communities (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety)	Deliver a series of Older People’s engagement events	Ongoing from April 2016
				Work with partners to establish EF Dementia Action Alliance	Commence April 2016
				Pursue Dementia Friendly Services and Communities linked to above	Commence April 2016
				Work with NHS and ECC colleagues to deliver Early Intervention initiatives in EF	Commence April 2016

Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016-2020

Objective 2: To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management

Ref	Action	Measures	Responsibility	Milestones	Deadline
1.	Review Procurement Strategy to ensure it reflects EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance requirements	Consideration of equality embedded in Procurement Strategy	Procurement Steering Group		March 2017
2.	Review procurement Toolkit and guidance to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance requirements for guidance documents	Consideration of equality embedded in Procurement Toolkit and Guidance	Procurement Steering Group		September 2016
3.	At next review opportunity undertake a review of Standing Orders to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance where appropriate	Standing Orders reflect the EHRC guidance for equality in procurement	Director Governance		March 2020

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4	Review Standing Orders user guide to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance where appropriate	Consideration of equality embedded in Standing Orders User Guide	Procurement Steering Group		March 2017
4.	<p>Ensure requirements for procurement business cases and specifications include the following equality considerations:</p> <p>Mandatory consideration:</p> <p>(a) Relevance to equality</p> <p>Considerations where equality is relevant; and applied in a proportionate way:</p> <p>(b) Added value potential;</p> <p>(c) Reasonable adjustments requirements;</p> <p>(d) Positive action which can be delivered through the procurement;</p> <p>(e) Monitoring requirements,</p>	Business cases and specifications include a consideration of equality, and record appropriate equality considerations	Directors		April 2016

Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016-2020

	responsibilities, and arrangements; (f) How requirements lots can facilitate equality.				
5.	Ensure PQQ suitability questions include, where relevant, demographic data and analysis of needs to help contractors to respond.	Relevant equality information is provided to contractors via the PQQ	Directors		April 2016
6.	Ensure arrangements for procurement activity advertising, includes a consideration of equality where relevant.	Advertising tailored to sector and size of supplier with capability to deliver requirements	Directors		April 2016
7.	Include equality clauses and requirements in tendering documents where relevant.	Equality requirements are included in tendering documents	Directors		April 2017
8.	Ensure contract management and control process include monitoring of equality requirements	Equality requirements are monitored	Directors		April 2016

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9.	Ensure equality benefits derived through procurement are recorded	Information about lessons learned is disseminated via the Intranet/Z Drive	Directors		March 2017
10.	Ensure equality lessons learnt through procurement contracts are captured and applied to future contracts	Information about lessons learnt is disseminated via the Intranet/Z Drive	Directors		March 2017

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Objective 3: To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans

Ref	Action	Measures	Responsibility	Milestones	Target dates
1.	Provide relevant equality training for employees and ensure future provision builds on training provision to date and targets corporate aims and objectives	Increased value to the Council and the individual of investment in training deployment	Resources (Learning and Development manager)	Training need identified and quantified	March 2017
				Training provision sourced	September 2017
				Training included in the Corporate Training Programme	April 2018

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2.	Update Procurement e-learning module to reflect equality requirements set out in Procurement Toolkit and Guidance / Standing Orders / Procurement Strategy	Officers are trained to meet Corporate requirements for procurement activities	Learning and Development Manager / Senior Procurement Officer	Procurement e-learning module reviewed and areas for development identified	March 2017
				E-learning module developed as appropriate	
				Module included in Corporate Training Programme	
3.	Review, evaluate and make improvements (where necessary) to the process for providing members with relevant equality information to support decision making (due regard record process).	Improved provision of relevant equality information to Members	Governance (PIU)	Review Due Regard Record system and evaluate	March 2017
				Identify and develop improvements where necessary	October 2017
				Gain approval of CEWG MB, and appropriate members	
				Promote with staff via District Lines and member Forums	April 2018

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				Include in member Training	2017/18 programme	
4.	Develop system for including relevant equality information in licencing and planning decision making	Relevant equality information provided to licencing and planning decision making bodies	Governance (PIU), (Development Management) / Neighbourhoods (Neighbourhood Services)	Liaise with NR and JN to identify process and required tools	June 2016	
				Develop system and gain approvals from CEWG, MB, and appropriate PFHs	December 2016	
				Promote with staff via District Lines	March 2017	
				Include in Member Training Programme	2017/18 programme	
5.	Develop, implement and promote an electronic system for equality screening and analysis submission	Greater accountability, improved record keeping, and information integrity in the equality analysis system	Governance (PIU)	Identify user requirements	June 2016	
				Resources (ICT)	Develop system	September 2016
				Governance PIU / Resources (ICT)	Implement system	April 2017
6.	Maintain accreditation to Mindful Employer for further 3 years	Commitment to supporting the mental health of employees	Resources (HR)		Dec 2016	

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Objective 4: To improve and develop equality in our business activities

Ref	Action	Outcomes	Responsibility	Milestones	Target dates
1.	Produce guidance / tool/s to support the integration of equality into projects and reviews	Improved due regard to equality in projects and reviews	Head of Transformation	Integration of equality into project management guidance / tools	April 2017
2.	Map, develop, and promote the potential to channel corporate equality expertise into corporate business processes (eg: <i>Building control for access issues; Neighbourhoods for languages spoken in the district</i>)	Improved resources for business processes	CEWG	Map developed	March 2017
			CEWG	Process developed	March 2018
			All Directors with responsibility	Implementation	March 2020
3.	Produce and promote a process for accessing comprehensive translation services	Improved access to translation services	Governance (PIU)	Process developed	June 2017
				Promote via Intranet and District Lines	September 2018
4	Review the requirement for business advice provided in other languages; extend the provision where identified	Non-English speakers and small businesses helped to gain skills and knowledge to enhance their employment opportunities	All Directors	Requirement reviewed	March 2017
				Develop provision where identified and appropriate	March 2020