



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Date: 24th March 2014

Subject: Leeds City Council's Decision Making Process and Due Regard to Equality

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. At its meeting in February, the Board agreed terms of reference for an inquiry into the Council's decision making process and due regard to equality. In summary the purpose of the inquiry was to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - Whether the current Equality Impact Assessment process provides the quality assurance of decision making demanded by the council
 - Whether the current Equality Impact Assessment process enables communities and interested groups to be involved appropriately in considering the impact of any proposals or whether other mechanisms should be adopted.
 - Whether there is sufficient support within the council to help promote and develop the equality agenda and to act as the champions for the nine 'equality characteristics' (Equality Areas); Race, Disability, Gender, Transgender, Age, Sexual orientation, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy and Maternity and Carers.
 - Whether the current process for 'due regard' and approaches to wider involvement and engagement specifically meet the needs of disabled people in Leeds. This is a particular issue that has been raised through the council's Equalities Assembly Disability Hub as a barrier to inclusion.

2. Attached to this cover report is a report provided by the Head of Equalities which addresses these four questions. In addition an example of a completed equality screening and equality impact assessment is attached which has been undertaken by Adult Social Care on a key decision.
3. Officers from Adult Social Care have been invited to today's meeting to discuss the practical use of Equality Impact Assessments.
4. Members of the Member Champions Equality Working Group have also been invited to give their views. The role of the Member Champions Equality Working Group is to support and promote the development of the equality agenda for Elected Members, engage with communities in particularly through the Council's 'Equality Assembly' and act as a political interface with key policy areas. The Elected Members sitting on this group are Cllr J Harper, Cllr B Anderson, Cllr S Golton and Cllr D Blackburn. The MBI's have not yet nominated a Member.
5. In line with the agreed terms of reference, a working group of the Board is to meet on 28th March to receive the views of the above mentioned 'Equality Assembly'.

Recommendations

6. Members are asked to discuss with attending officers and Elected Members the equality impact assessment process, concentrating particularly on the four areas identified within the Inquiry's terms of reference.

Background documents¹

None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.