

Report of Assistant Chief Executive – Citizens and Communities

Report to Citizens and Communities Scrutiny

Date: 14 September 2015

Subject: Equality Update; Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2020, and the Equality Framework Reaccreditation

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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. The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011-15 have been reviewed. As a result of this the Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 - 2020 have been produced. These continue to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
2. The priorities have been developed to compliment the Council Business Plan priorities and help to underpin the ambitions of the city to have a strong economy with a compassionate backdrop.
3. The Equality Improvement Priorities are encompassed in a standalone document, but also form a part of the Equality Action Paper and are linked to and referenced within the Council Business Plan.
4. The council attained Excellence of the Equality Framework for Local Government in 2011. To gain reaccreditation a self-assessment, narrative and supporting evidence have been produced.
5. Assessment of the council against the Equality Framework is via a desk top exercise and peer assessment which will take place in November 2015

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Note the contents of the Equality Framework narrative
- Comment on the Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-20.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the approach taken to develop the Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 - 20, and how these support the ambitions of the city.
- 1.2 It also outlines the plans for reassessment of the council against the Equality Framework for Local Government at excellent level (the highest available).

2 Background information

- 2.1 Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 includes a specific duty to develop equality priorities which are reviewed every 4 years. The specific duty requires local authorities to:
 - publish accessible information outlining the equality analysis which has taken place to inform equality objectives
 - engage with people who have an interest in furthering the aims of the general equality duty
 - demonstrate progress against equality objectives for both employment and service delivery
- 2.2 To develop the equality improvement priorities consideration has been given to understanding the nature of any disproportional outcome on different groups covered by equality legislation. This information is included in the Equality Action Paper. Appendix 1 summarises the equality improvement priorities for the council for 2016-20 in a draft document which will be designed to look and feel like the Best Council Plan. Appendix 2 shows which of these have been retained from 2011-15.
- 2.3 Progress has been reported on an annual basis against the 2011-15 priorities, and this year's Annual Update is included in the Equality Action Paper. In addition to progress, it shows the consultation which has taken place in order to inform the current priorities, and the specific equality analysis which underpins why these are areas to focus on.
- 2.4 The information contained within the Annual Update was informed by the evidence which has been collected for the reaccreditation against the Equality Framework. The Equality Framework narrative is at Appendix 3.
- 2.5 The Equality Framework narrative is supported by a self-assessment and the storyboards, some of which are also included in the Annual Update.
- 2.6 Re assessment of the Equality Framework will take place 25 -26 November. The peer assessors will consider the evidence provided and will conduct a series of interview, focus groups whilst there here, as well as attending some or all of the Equality Assembly conference on 26 November.
- 2.7 The outcome of the reaccreditation is expected in January 2016.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Many of the Equality Improvement Priorities 2011-15 have been retained into 2016 -20; these are showing progress and continue to be areas of focus.

Appendix 2 shows these. There are a number of these which are specifically highlighted below to provide additional information in relation to their continuation as priorities:

- **To develop a skilled and diverse workforce** – there has been little change in the outcomes for people with protected characteristics. There has been a move to focus on the culture of the organisation so that we are more of an employer of choice when we are recruiting. In addition a new Inclusion and Diversity Member Steering Group has been established to consider how to address this area. The commitment and challenge to this area is being strongly led by Tom Riordan and the Corporate Leadership Team.
- **Domestic Violence** – is a major social issue which is systemically entrenched within generations of family groups and as such there is a need to be constantly re-evaluating our response to the crime type. There is a need to fully understand the changing nature of domestic violence and abuse in Leeds, particularly within the context of constantly changing demographics. Domestic violence has now been identified as a top priority for LCC and as such is one of seven breakthrough projects and significant work is taking place, with partners, to address this at a city wide and council level. Its prioritisation is critical at this time.
- **Hate Crime** – has seen a slight rise in reported incidents over the last year. This is seen as a sign of success in improving confidence in the systems and therefore increased reporting. In addition to increasing reporting the focus is on decreasing repeat incidents. The reports have been predominantly in relation to race, but also include incidents against disabled people, LGB T, people of faith, and transgender people. Race hate crime in Leeds is complex and reflects the changing nature of communities and some of the tensions therein. The current Hate Crime Strategy for Leeds was developed in 2014 and this outlines the approach taken to challenge, report and stop hate crime.
- **Understand the context and impact of migration on Leeds** – Leeds is a diverse and ever changing city. We want to ensure that we take all possible steps to meet the needs of new communities and build sustainable and strong communities. There is an increased focus on this area due to the international position and reduced funding
- **Financial hardship** – the current economic climate has meant that there are more people facing this position and therefore this is a harder area to address. The Supporting Communities and Tackling Poverty narrative outlines all the work which is taking place which should alleviate some of the issues

3.2 The Equality Improvement priorities underpin the Best Council Plan priorities and work is taking place to align these more closely including eg covering the same time frame. In aligning these areas there may be some additional requirements to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Extensive public consultation has taken place on major pieces of work including the Vision for Leeds and budget setting. Both these have been used to inform the priorities as have service specific consultations which continue to take place. All information is recorded in TalkingPoint so that there can be easy and shared learning.
- 4.1.2 As part of the localisation agenda more conversations are happening locally and these are being used to shape and inform further and future work

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities are in place to provide focus to address issues of inequality. They are based on evidence of disproportionate outcomes, which we are seeking to challenge and change.
- 4.2.2 The tools and mechanisms that the council use will continue to play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing inequality and these priorities form one part of this. Equality Impact Assessments continue to take place and inform the further development in addressing each of these priorities.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities sit with the council priorities and are an integral part of the ambition to be a compassionate city and to tackle inequalities in the city.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Developing and publishing our 4 year Equality Improvement Priorities is in compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- 4.5.2 This report does not contain any confidential or exempted information and is not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Any risks associated with specific priorities are addressed as part of service delivery.
- 4.6.2 The risk to the council in not developing 4 yearly equality priorities and/or not publishing these is that we will be in breach of the Equality Act 2010

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed following a robust process and will help the council to focus on areas of disproportionality and tackle inequalities

6 Recommendations

6.1 Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Note the contents of the Equality Framework narrative
- Comment on the Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-20.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Equality Action Paper

7.2 Self assessment for Equality Framework for Local Government

7.3 Supporting storyboards for Equality Framework for Local Government

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.