

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)

Report to Area Chairs Forum

Date: 13th July 2012

Subject: Equality Improvement Priorities 2011- 2015

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 have been produced to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
2. Closer alignment with the Vision for Leeds, the City Priority Plan and the Council Business Plan were built into the development of the priorities and provides the foundations for a move towards a city wide approach to equality.
3. In addition, the council's Equality and Diversity Policy has been revised and updated to reflect the new legal framework.

Recommendations

1. Area Committee Chairs are asked to
 - note the contents of the report
 - circulate this report and the Equality Improvement Priorities to the next round of Area Committee meetings

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report brings to Scrutiny Board the new Equality Improvement Priorities and the revised Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 1.2 This new approach sets out the council's continued commitment to equality. It outlines the council's equality objectives, identifies how progress will be measured and how we will continue to improve and further embed the equality agenda.
- 1.3 This work will be developed further over the next two years with a view to move towards a city wide partnership approach to equality. This reflects the ambitions outlined in the City Priority Plan to have key improvement priorities for the city as well as the council.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council has a leading role in the city to promote equality and value diversity. There is considerable work that has taken place to make equality an integral part of our work and in particular in how we deliver services, how we employ people, how we work with our partners and how we make decisions.
- 2.2 Work to date has included strengthening and enhancing equality considerations in the policy, planning and performance management framework, the scrutiny process, employment policies and procedures, service planning and the regulatory framework.
- 2.3 Equality considerations are now an integral part of the decision making process and considerable work has taken place on embedding equality into all aspects of work.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework and introduced a general public sector duty that requires public bodies to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - foster good relations between different groups
- 3.2 The new legislative framework has also introduced specific duties 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

- 3.3 To meet our legal duties the Equality Improvement Priorities in Appendix 1 have been produced. The Equality Improvement priorities outline how the council will improve outcomes for different people across the city.
- 3.4 Closer alignment with the Vision for Leeds, the City Priority Plan and the Council Business Plan was built into the development of the approach and has resulted in a more integrated approach to equality in the council's strategic planning framework. The equality outcomes were developed alongside the key priorities for the city as outlined in the City Priority Plan and action plans, and are based on an analysis of the equality perspective.
- 3.5 These have been considered and approved by Executive Board who agreed that they would also be circulated to Area Committees so that all Members are aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy and Improvement Priorities.
- 3.6 Following the Executive Board meeting a further discussion on the Equality Improvement priorities took place with the Member Champions Group. This is a cross party group which has been set up to support and promote the development of the equality agenda for elected members. They have a particular focus on developing corporate policy approaches to equality and diversity including having an overview of the performance management of the equality priorities for the city.
- 3.7 The Member Champions Group also proposed that the Improvement Priorities were circulated to each Scrutiny Board and that equality progress and regular reports against relevant indicators were presented to Scrutiny Boards.
- 3.8 The early approval of the council's Equality Improvement Priorities meant we met the target date set out in equality legislation and also allowed us to finalise the progress reporting arrangements. Although it was agreed that progress against the equality analysis, objectives, activities and measures would be reported through the new Performance Management Framework, which has been agreed for the City Priority Plan and the Council Business Plan, some additional work was required to ensure that separate processes were not developed. In addition it was agreed that an annual report will be produced and published as we will have to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually.
- 3.9 As a result of this the circulation of the Equality Improvement priorities to Area Committee's and Scrutiny Boards was pushed back to the first cycle of meetings in 2012/13. This was to allow for further work that was identified to ensure that a pragmatic approach for reporting progress was developed to avoid duplication of work and synchronised the reporting cycles.
- 3.10 Annual progress will now be reported through the State of the City Report and the Equality and Diversity Position Statement and an annual update on equality and diversity and progress against priorities is to be included within the Business Plan and City Priority Plan performance report.

3.11 In addition the council's Equality and Diversity Policy in Appendix 2 has also been updated to reflect the new legal framework. The key aim of the policy is to ensure that we continue to work towards strengthening our approach to equality.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 During 2010 a review took place which resulted in a number of changes to the city and council planning and partnership framework. In particular, a whole system approach has been sought which ensures the partnership structures, strategic plans and performance management arrangements all dovetail into an effective system for delivering real change across the city.

4.1.2 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 is part of the city's revised planning framework and is integral to it.

4.1.3 Extensive consultation and involvement was undertaken in the development of the city's revised planning framework and the outcome of this has been used to shape and influence the council's equality objectives.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 Equality and diversity was considered throughout the development of the new strategic planning framework. This included checking that due regard has been given to equality through the use of equality related evidence in needs assessments, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities, which include:

- The 'What if Leeds...? Campaign'
- The spending challenge consultation
- Equality assurance and impact assessment on the approach to strategic planning

4.2.2 Tackling inequality was a key issue identified through the consultation.

4.2.3 The council's Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure we meet our legal duties in the Equality Act 2010.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The proposed work will help to shape and deliver future equality priorities contained in and delivered through the Vision for Leeds and the City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015 and help the council to demonstrate how it is addressing the needs of the cities diverse communities.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.3 The development of the new approach to improving equality and diversity and setting equality objectives will reinforce the council's commitment to equality and help us meet our legal duties.

4.5.4 This report does not contain any confidential or exempted information and is not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The risks to the council if it did not have a published approach to equality and diversity would be the failure to meet equality duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The development of the Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

6 Recommendations

6.2 Area Chairs Forum is recommended to:

- note the contents of this report;
- circulate this report and the Equality Improvement Priorities to the next round of Area Committee meetings
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7 Background documents¹

7.1 Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030

7.2 City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015

7.3 Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.

Appendix 1

The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 – 2015

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises different people’s different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be”

As a council, we are committed to promoting equality and diversity in terms of the people we serve, our workforce, the partners we work with and the services we deliver. Our ambition is to be the best City in the UK. We will only achieve our ambition if as a city we work to reduce disadvantage, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity. Failure to tackle discrimination and to provide equality of opportunity can have a negative impact on people, undermines society and costs our economy.

We want to inspire pride in our city and all our communities. No one in Leeds should be held back from reaching their potential because of who they are, or where they come from. It is all our responsibility to tackle the causes of inequality and build a stronger, fairer and more cohesive society.

The Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed from the priorities outlined in the City Priority Plan and the Council Business Plan. They provide a summary of our strategic equality analysis and our strategic equality objectives which are supported by specific work across the council. Progress against the Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 – 2015 will be reported on an annual basis.

City Priority Plan - Best cityfor children and young people

Priority - Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
(taken from the Children and Young People's Plan)

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Support children from all equality communities to be ready for learning	There are lower levels of attainment for some BME communities, people with special educational needs and those from poorer areas

City Priority Plan - Best city for.....communities

Priority - Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Address the impact of burglary on Vulnerable Communities	There is an identified need to better assess the impact of burglary on emerging communities.
Tackle domestic violence and protect and support the most vulnerable young people.	The overwhelming majority of domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women and children.
Improve citywide approaches to dealing with hate crime	Disability, race, homophobic and transphobic hate crime is experienced by many people

Priority - Increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
There is a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities	In 2010/11 a small but concerning trend in youth related anti-social behaviour and damage which suggest deliberate targeting of vulnerable victims (adults with learning disabilities, BME residents in predominantly White British neighbourhoods, gay or lesbian couples) was recognised.

City Priority Plan - Best city to live

Priority - Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Ensure that housing and regeneration investment meets the changing needs of individuals and communities.	Households headed by women with children, BME groups and those living in the social rented sector are more likely to live in overcrowded or substandard housing. There are also significantly higher numbers of BME people and people with disabilities who are unemployed

Priority - Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Improve energy efficiency	Many households containing people recovering from long term illness, disabled people, and pensioners can not afford to heat their homes

City Priority Plan - Best city.....for health and wellbeing

Priority - Give people choice and control over their health and social care services

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
We will support individuals from all communities to access social care through personalised budgets and direct payments	The equality analysis of access to personalised budgets and direct payments is ongoing.

Priority - Support more people to live safely in their own homes

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
To support adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable to live safe and independent lives	The group with the largest proportion of safeguarding investigations in 2010/2011 were service users with learning disabilities

Priority - Make sure that people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
All universal social care services are equally accessible to members of all communities	The equality analysis of access to universal social care services is ongoing.
To commission targeted adult social care services for specific equality communities and to ensure these services are effective	Equality analysis from specific reviews is used to inform future commissioning (or de-commissioning) of services at both a service and sector wide level
New migrant communities effectively access appropriate health and social care services	Some groups eg Eritrean women, and people whose cultures prevent mental health issues being explicitly recognized, do not effectively access health and social care.

City Priority Plan - Best cityfor business

Priorities - Create more jobs and Improve skills

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Increase access to employment opportunities and up-skill the workforce	There are lower levels of skills and employment amongst some communities in particular some BME groups, and disabled people.

Priority - Support the sustainable growth of the Leeds' economy

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Improve financial inclusion	Lack of access to financial services disproportionately affects lone parents (typically female) disabled people, people with mental health illness, and those living in poorer areas.

Priority - Improve journey times and the reliability of public transport

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Enable access for all to local services,	Disabled and elderly people have specific concerns in accessing transport

education and employment centres by public transport	
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Priority - Get more people involved in the city's cultural opportunities

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Ensure the continuing development of the council's cultural offer, including the successful transition to the new arrangements for sport and libraries	People from poorer areas, BME people and disabled people do not access sport services as much as others. Low numbers of disabled people access libraries
Enhance the quality of Leeds' Parks	Disabled people, those from a BME background, and men tend to visit parks less than other groups

Council Business Plan

The Council Business Plan draws together aspects of the City Priority Plan with those areas and priorities specific to the council itself. There are a number of cross cutting equality objectives included in the Council Business Plan which provide the building blocks for ensuring that equality is embedded in all our service delivery and as an employer. They are outlined here:

Equality Performance Area - Understanding our communities. Leeds communities are changing and it is vital that we have a clear understanding of who our citizens are in order to provide appropriate services in the most appropriate way.

Equality focus (objective)	Council Value
There is good evidence of the equalities profile of Leeds, based on national and local data, which is regularly reviewed	Working with communities

Equality Performance Area - Showing leadership and working in partnership. We will give due consideration to equality and diversity when we develop policies and make decisions. We will ensure that we fully understand the impacts of changed funding on different communities, and take this into account when making decisions

Equality focus (objective)	Council Value
Councillors and Officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to Leeds are taken into account when making major decisions	Being open, honest and trusted

Equality Performance Area - Involving our communities - We will ensure communities are effectively able to influence what we do

Equality focus (objective)	Council Value
Equality groups are integrally involved in consultation and engagement activities	Working with communities

Equality Performance Area - A modern and diverse workforce – We will understand the make up of our workforce and work to ensure it is representative of the population of Leeds

Equality focus (objective)	Council Value
To make LCC an ‘employer of choice’ for people from groups in our communities whose diverse backgrounds are not yet fully represented in our workforce	Treating people fairly
To demonstrate increased engagement, year on year, for staff from groups whose diversity is not yet fully represented in our workforce.	
To improve opportunities for progression to senior levels in the organisation particularly for black, and minority ethnic and disabled staff	

Further detail is in supporting documentation which is available on the council website, and includes:

Consultation and Involvement in Developing Equality Objectives
 Equality and Diversity Position Statement 2011
 Equality Analysis, Objectives and Activities 2011 - 2015
 Equality and Diversity Policy 2011 - 2015
 Approach to Embedding Equality 2011 - 2015

For enquiries about Leeds City Council’s equality improvement priorities 2011 - 2015 please contact the Equality Team:

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By email: equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk

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