

Subject:	Response to the Brighton and Hove Fairness Commission		
Date of Meeting:	28 November 2016, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities 8 December 2016, Policy Resources & Growth Committee		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer – Strategy, Governance and Law		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's response to the recommendations of the Brighton and Hove Fairness Commission.
- 1.2 It summarises the process for coordinating, responding to and managing the recommendations within the Council, as well as setting out the wider city partner responses and the arrangements for implementation and governance going forward.
- 1.3 Appendix One provides detailed responses to each recommendation and provides supporting information regarding timescales, responsibilities and budget where relevant.
- 1.4 Agreement to the establishment of a Fairness Commission was given by the Council's Policy, Resources and Growth Committee (then titled Policy and Resources) on 11 June 2015.
- 1.5 The Commission produced its final report on 27th June and made 117 recommendations which were received by the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee on behalf of the council on 11th July 2016.
- 1.6 At this meeting it was agreed to establish a cross party Member working group which has overseen the development and content of the council's response.
- 1.7 The Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out our purpose, values and priorities. The principles working across the plan include our commitment to increasing equality and ensuring everyone is able to share in the city's prosperity. The Fairness Commission helps us to achieve this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee

- 2.1 That the Committee welcomes and agrees the responses detailed in Appendix One to this report.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees with the outcomes of the cross party Member working group process; including the decision to prioritise 15 recommendations as set out in Appendix Two.
- 2.3 That the Committee notes that other recommendations are being progressed, either within the council or beyond through Brighton and Hove Connected and the family of partnerships.
- 2.4 That the Committee notes that budget decisions for prioritised recommendations will be taken forward through the budget setting process.
- 2.5 That the Committee agrees to hold responsibility for delivery against the recommendations on behalf of the Council.

Policy, Resources & Growth Committee

- 2.6 That the Committee agree the response to the Fairness Commission recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to this report and authorises Officers to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of the responses.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission was formed by Brighton & Hove City Council in 2015 as an independent body to make recommendations about how the council and its partners should better work together to improve life for the citizens of Brighton & Hove.
- 3.2 The body was made up of 12 panel members from different professional backgrounds including housing, transport, voluntary sector and health.
- 3.3 A large scale public engagement plan was put in place to reach out to the city and hear citizen's views on making the city a fairer place to live, work and visit.
- 3.4 The Commission also heard evidence at themed meetings around older people and wellbeing, children & young people, housing and employment & skills and accepted a wealth of evidence from residents, private and public organisations and communities.
- 3.5 The Final Report was launched on 27th June 2017 and contained 117 recommendations for the council, its partners and national Government. There are two parts to the report – a 'Headlines' document and a full narrative. All reports can be found here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/fairness-commission>

- 3.6 The report was received by the Council's Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee in July 2016 and a cross party Member Working Group was established to oversee the detailed work gathering responses.

Brighton & Hove City Council – Response

- 3.7 Full implementation will be a long term process with the recommendations being used to influence, level and affect change across a wide range of services and the council will ensure that the recommendations are embedded into its core business planning and performance frameworks.
- 3.8 The Fairness Commission was undertaken in a short space of time and it heard from a huge range of contributors. This meant that the final report included a significant range of recommendations at a time of reducing budgets. In broad terms the recommendations can be clustered as follows:
- Those that are being taken forward as part of planned work,
 - Those that require additional resources to implement,
 - Those that are being considered through city partnerships,
 - Those that are more relevant to central government and national policy priorities.
- 3.9 In order to manage this, the Member Working Group has sought to prioritise a 'first tranche' of recommendations which:
- Represent value for money and in particular do not involve recurring costs;
 - Do not duplicate existing work and effort;
 - Have the maximum impact on fairness and poverty;
 - Are within the council's gift to influence;
 - Were considered by the public and communities contributing to be of high importance;
 - Are achievable and realistic;
 - Bring innovation or best practice from elsewhere to the city;
 - Empirically highlight areas where improvement or further action is required.
- 3.10 A total of 15 recommendations were prioritised in this way and are set out in Appendix Two. Of these, 3 recommendations have potential budget implications.

Recommendation 49: [Poverty proofing the school day](#)

- 3.11 A preliminary cost of £150k over 2 years has been identified for ensuring that all schools in the city benefit from the Children North East model. This includes an audit of each school and consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The result is an action plan tailored to each individual school to address any stigmatising policies or practices such as the way free school meals are served or branded expensive uniforms with no cheaper options allowed. Training and a toolkit are also provided for staff to help embed the culture change in the long term.

Recommendation 50: Free school meals in school holidays

- 3.12 Holiday hunger was a significant finding of the Commission. They heard stories of how some children went without meals when not at school receiving free lunches. Locally several schemes exist including those run by [Chomp](#); a local food poverty project and those run in partnership with the council's school meals service. Estimated cost for the Chomp service is £2.43 per meal (which includes on-costs) meaning a total cost of £1,555 per year based on 16 sessions for 40 guests. The council run service is an estimated £2.13 per meal (but this does not include on-costs).

Recommendation 31: Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

- 3.13 Members felt that this recommendation presented a strong 'spend to save' business case. Work is therefore underway to explore whether tenants in supported accommodation could access the private sector with funding provided by Discretionary Housing Payments and/or the Credit Union with an insurance provider effectively acting as a rent guarantor. Initially this is likely to mean a small cohort of people benefitting with a view to expansion if proven successful and viable.
- 3.14 The other recommendations outside of the priorities will continue to be progressed in the ways described above but they may not be allocated additional budget.

City Wide Partners – Response

- 3.15 As many of the Commission's recommendations relate to the roles and responsibilities of other partners in the city; (e.g. the Clinical Commissioning Group and The Chamber of Commerce); Brighton and Hove Connected is coordinating the wider response.
- 3.16 This has included presentations and discussions at thematic partnerships including Transport, Equality & Inclusion, the Arts Commission, City, Employment & Skills and Housing enabling detailed input from members such as the Bus Company and third sector.
- 3.17 In addition a workshop was held on 14.11.16 which sought to engage the widest range of stakeholders in contributing to the realisation of the recommendations. A short summary paper of this event will be tabled at Committee on the 28th.

Ensuring Good Governance and City Wide Engagement

- 3.18 It is proposed that the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee retain an oversight role to ensure effective delivery of the council's response to the recommendations with Brighton & Hove Connected will perform a similar function on behalf of city partners.
- 3.19 The Fairness Commission itself will be meeting again in January and June to review progress and add support to implementation. Learning from Commissions around the country suggests that this is an important part of ensuring good governance and delivery.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Consideration of alternative options to the establishment of a Fairness Commission was presented to the Policy, Resources and Growth Committee in June 2016.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Commission undertook extensive consultation during the course of its work, the full details of which are available as appendices to the main report. The public consultation analysis report is available on the council's website.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Members are asked to note and agree the Council's response to the Fairness Commission.
- 6.2 Members are asked to agree to the prioritisation of recommendations by the Member working group.
- 6.3 Members are asked to agree that budget decisions are included as part of normal budget setting processes.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

Financial implications in relation to Recommendations 49, 50 and 51 have been highlighted in this report. Other financial implications may emerge as the work unfolds and further options are explored. Any actions requiring significant one-off or recurrent annual funds will normally need to be considered on a case by case basis as part of the council's annual budget setting process for approval by Budget Council.

Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell

Date: 16/11/16

7.2 Legal Implications:

The proposals in the Fairness Commission's recommendations and the proposed response, in addition to supporting the Council's priorities, will help the Council in discharging its statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010. This includes the duty under section 1 of the Act regarding the need to have regard to socio-economic inequalities and to exercise its powers in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

Given the wide ranging and corporate implications of the recommendations of the Commission, it is appropriate that the final decision on the response and implementation plan is referred to the Policy Resources and Growth Committee.

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date: 17 November 2016"

7.3 Equalities Implications:

The Fairness Commission has looked at a significant range of equality and fairness issues. Recommendations for all protected characteristic groups are included in the draft report and if accepted will have implications for the Council's work across the organisation.

7.4 Sustainability Implications:

A broad definition of sustainability, which takes account of the health and wellbeing of people and communities as well as the environment, is wedded through the principles and priorities of our Corporate Plan 2015-19. These are interconnected in terms of the causes and outcomes of inequality, which many of the recommendations in the Fairness Commission seek to address.

7.5 Any Other Significant Implications:

If accepted the Fairness Commission recommendations have considerable implications for many Council departments, services and teams. These will be embedded into Directorate and Team Plans.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Table setting out the council's response to each recommendation.
2. Recommendations prioritised by the Member Working Group.
3. Poverty Proofing the School Day in Brighton & Hove - summary report and possible options

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Hard copies of Appendices One and Two

