
Brighton & Hove City Council Equality & Inclusion Policy Statement and Strategy



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A. Our Vision for Equality and Inclusion in Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove is a vibrant city that is culturally, economically and socially diverse. The council values this diversity and aims to support and encourage it. We also take a leading role in seeking to increase equality, inclusion and fairness in the city.

'Increasing Equality' is a central principle informing how we plan, finance, deliver, commission and review our services.

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is unwavering even with the financial challenges we face. Our aspiration is for a more equal city where no-one is left behind, and where everyone shares in the city's prosperity and is respected.

To achieve our vision for inclusion, equality and fairness in the city we will lead by example, work with others, invest in communities, and listen and act when people tell us how we can do better.

The council has an important role in tackling inequality. We will continue to ensure services are provided to those people experiencing greatest disadvantage and we will work with people to reduce their exclusion and ensure equality of opportunity.

We are committed to increasing equality, opportunities and fairness inside our organisation, within our services and in the city, and to eliminating discrimination. We will promote and support good relations and cohesion between all communities in the city so that everyone feels part of Brighton & Hove and can benefit from and contribute to our city.

This strategy sets out our equality objective and areas of focus and action. It guides the work of all staff and elected members in the council as we deliver public services. By defining our priorities for the coming years we enable a consistent corporate focus on achieving greater equality and inclusion in our city.

Our Purpose: to provide strong civic leadership for the wellbeing and aspiration of Brighton & Hove

Our Values:



Our successes so far

We have taken significant steps to improve equality and inclusion through the following strategic activities:

- Understanding our communities, their needs and assets through our programme of needs assessments;
- Embedding equalities monitoring into our services and consultations and using this information to improve;
- Listening to the views of diverse communities through our membership of city-wide partnerships and engagement activities;
- Supporting community activity, volunteering and local improvements through our programme of funding community and voluntary organisations;
- Mainstreaming equality and inclusion principles and work into our Corporate, Directorate and Service plans;
- Proactively taking forward national opportunities: we were the first council to hold a same sex marriage ceremony, and we have also responded when national developments may negatively impact on vulnerable people, such as establishing a new money advice and support service for those facing financial difficulty
- Retaining our commitment to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to inform service and budget changes;
- Inviting external and independent assessment of our work by taking part in equality charters such as Stonewall Education Equality Index and the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government ;
- Setting up an independent Fairness Commission to hear the public's views on how to make the city a fairer place to live;
- Introducing a culture change programme to enhance managers' leadership skills, to model and demonstrate [our corporate values](#) and help us to deliver improved services across the city;
- Responding to community feedback, we have re viewed our recruitment and selection policy and processes to improve the success rates for groups under-represented within our workforce, particularly those from a BME and White Other background and those who are disabled, so that our workforce more closely reflects the diversity of the community we serve;
- Improving the collection and analysis of our workforce and recruitment data has given us a better understanding of the issues affecting our workforce so that we can focus our work in those areas that are key to delivering improved, tangible equality outcomes for our staff;
- Using positive action initiatives as part of a recruitment campaign for newly-qualified social workers resulting in a doubling of applicants from a BME background.

Feedback from our recent assessment within the Equality Framework has been built into this strategy. The full report is available here: [hyperlink](#)

C. Our Challenges and Opportunities Going Forward

Local government is going through **immense changes**. Budgets from central government are reducing significantly. Services must change radically and some may have to stop altogether. Elected members have difficult decisions to make; many of which will have significant impact on people in the city. There has, therefore, never been a more important time to ensure that equality and inclusion issues directly inform decision making.

The **national and international context** for the council and city is challenging. Changes to welfare and benefit systems and the costs of living and especially housing in the city are putting many people under pressure. The result of the referendum on leaving the EU raises many questions about how the city and the country will interact with the rest of the continent and the wider world. Events across the UK and the world have local consequences and impacts on individuals and communities for good or ill, affecting community cohesion and relations between people.

Geographically, Brighton & Hove is a tightly constrained urban area: the sea and the South Downs National Park mean there are few opportunities for the city to expand. Despite this, our population is predicted to rise from 273,400 to 298,400 by 2024, increasing the demand on public services. This means we will have to work even harder to ensure that the right services meet diverse needs at the right times, in the right ways.

Having an **in-depth, current understanding** of our communities, their diversity, identities, assets and needs helps us to consider how best to design and deliver our services. We know that the city includes some of the most deprived areas in the South East with significant inequalities facing certain neighbourhoods and communities of identity.

- We have a growing Black and minority ethnic (BME) population which is very diverse and relatively young;
- Disabled people face specific problems in the city linked to geography and heritage buildings. There are also significant issues for people in the city relating to mental health;
- The city is generally trans-friendly but discrimination, abuse and isolation are still problems;
- There is a relatively large and well-established lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) community in the city, but there are still issues in relation to discrimination and disadvantage;
- The migrant community grew more in Brighton & Hove than anywhere else in England between the 2001 and 2011 censuses;
- The age demographic in the city is unusual with a large population of young adults (linked to the universities) and also a growing number of people who can be described as the 'oldest old';
- In the 2011 census the city had the second largest percentage of people who said they had no religion or belief (roughly the same as those who said they were Christian).

With the diversity of the city comes opportunity, in the form of a wide range of skills, talents, experience, knowledge and abilities. We have strong and cohesive communities who work to support each other and a diverse business sector responding to a range of customer interests. The city is aspirational and outward-looking. It is seen as a destination of choice for international tourists and students, both at language schools and the universities. Our reputation as a city for diversity and inclusion is economically advantageous as well as socially beneficial.

In terms of the **council's workforce**, we are committed to ensuring our recruitment and selection process is fair, consistent and transparent and that job opportunities are accessible to as wide and diverse an audience as possible. However we know that certain equality groups, particularly BME people, are under-represented in our workforce, especially at more senior levels. We are using [positive action](#) to increase the diversity of new recruits with the aim of building a workforce with an equality profile that reflects the city's economically active population. We recognise that this is a challenge given there will be fewer job opportunities in the future as the council decreases in size.

There are advantages in the council being an employer that actively values and promotes a diverse workforce. We perform best by harnessing the complementary skills, knowledge, backgrounds and networks of a rich mix of people who work together in an environment that is fully inclusive and respecting of individuals. People from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and perceptions which can make the way we work more efficient and products and services better. Our commitment to diversity and equality is to our own staff as well as to the communities we serve, driven partly by purpose as a local authority but also by our business need to attract talented people into the organisation.

There are high levels of correlation between income inequality and social mobility, teenage births, imprisonment, trust, mental illness and obesity. Addressing and reducing inequality means benefits for individuals, communities, the city and the council.

D. Our Equality Objective

The Equality Act 2010 requires councils (and other public sector organisations) to set at least one equality objective every four years. Our objective covers all aspects of our work, all our services and everyone protected by the law.

Our objective:

To achieve excellence in our equality practice, as measured by the Equality Framework for Local Government, by 2020

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is the only nationally recognised, comprehensive, external equality assessment specifically for local authorities.

It assesses councils' performance in relation to equality in five key areas:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce.

The purpose of the EFLG is to help organisations, in discussion with local partners and local people, review and improve their performance in relation to the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010. The EFLG focuses on how councils respond to local issues and problems, and encourages learning from good practice.

Councils can be assessed as Developing, Achieving or Excellent under the EFLG. In 2016 the council was assessed as 'Achieving'. This strategy provides the focus, direction and activities for us to achieve 'Excellent' by 2020.

Working towards achieving our equality objective will also help ensure the council meets its requirements under the Equality Act 2010 [public sector equality duty \(PSED\)](#), which requires councils to show how they have paid conscious attention to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out all their activities.

E. Social, economic and legal drivers for this strategy

There is a strong moral case for the council to excel in our equality and diversity practices. Brighton & Hove is a city that has long held a reputation for inclusion, being welcoming and openness to difference – and the city council should and must reflect, support and strengthen those principles.

An inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect would be a society with less conflict and insecurity. A society where diversity is celebrated would encourage active participation from all, where everyone would demonstrate their social and moral responsibility from a basis of shared values.

People are more likely to have better confidence and trust in services if they believe that they will be treated with dignity and respect and they will be more satisfied with these services, which is important at a time when public funding is being scrutinised more than ever.

Good equality and diversity practice avoids wasting resources by providing services that people want or need and which are inappropriate.

The council is more likely to attract people from a wider pool of talent if it is explicit in its commitment to diversity and is demonstrating this through how it operates. Staff are more likely to perform well, feel motivated and committed and therefore be retained if they feel valued and respected in their working environment.

Finally, in legal terms, the council has legal duties (in the Equality Act 2010, more details below) to ensure that it assesses and pays attention to the impacts of its work on people, linked to their legally protected characteristics.

F. How will we achieve the aims of this strategy?

Everybody has a role play in achieving this strategy because all council staff have legal duties and individual responsibilities in relation to equality. They are:

All staff:

- Being aware of the council's legal equality duties and our organisations commitments and what they mean practically for them in their roles.
- Treating service users, colleagues and residents with dignity and respect whilst responding positively and appropriately to meet diverse needs.
- Challenging and report to managers incidents where equality practice has not been followed, including discrimination, harassment and bullying.

All managers:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of their personal responsibilities in relation to promoting equalities.
- Ensuring continued improvement and equality outcomes in relation to the accessibility and delivery of services to residents.
- Creating an inclusive workplace culture in which all staff can thrive and reach their potential.

- Ensuring all staff are supported and trained so that they can perform their jobs effectively.
- Managing all staff fairly and equitably through the consistent and fair application of HR policies and procedures.
- Setting clear standards of behaviours in line with the council's values and promptly dealing with any instances of inappropriate behaviour, including discrimination, harassment and bullying.

All elected members:

- Championing equality within the council, including undertaking a scrutiny role to ensure that equality considerations are integrated in the decision making and governance of the council
- Leading, supporting and advocating for the diverse people and communities they represent
- Using equality impact assessments to inform decision making to avoid discrimination, promote inclusion and wherever possible increase fairness in the city.

G. Achieving our Equality Objective

Our objective:

To achieve excellence in our equality practice, as measured by the Equality Framework for Local Government, by 2020

The Equality Framework identifies best practice in five areas. We will use these as guides for our five areas of focus. We will combine our knowledge of city issues and challenges with the feedback from our partners and staff along with our 2016 EFLG assessment to define our priorities and actions.

Our five areas of focus are:

1. Open and equitable services
2. Inclusive employer
3. Services that understand our diverse population
4. Strong and fair leadership
5. Effective partnership working to reduce inequality

1. Open and equitable services

We aim to improve:

- Targeting of services and interventions
- Quality and relevance of services
- The ability of services to respond effectively to changes in the city and to individual people's needs
- Customer satisfaction
- Accessibility of services

We will do this in the following ways:

1.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

Carrying out EIAs helps us to pay conscious attention to the potential impact of our actions on all people relating to their protected characteristics in service delivery, commissioning services and in our role as an employer. EIAs are a tool to help us identify how different people might be affected in different ways and take action to increase positive impacts and reduce negative ones.

We assess equality impact before introducing a new service or making changes to services, when developing or revising policies or strategies, and where there is or might be any impact on service-users and/or staff.

Keeping a record of how decisions are reached helps us to demonstrate that we have considered the aims of the equality duty and are delivering services which are appropriate, flexible and responsive to the needs of our diverse community. [Completed EIAs](#) are listed on the council's website and are available on request.

Importantly, EIAs help us to continuously improve our customer service and ensure high levels of satisfaction.

To achieve excellence:

We will better share findings of EIAs between relevant services and monitor planned actions.

We will also increase our assessment of the cumulative impacts of changes to service provision, whether commissioned from others or provided by the council.

1.2 Service delivery and performance monitoring

To ensure open and equitable services, Directorate and Service Plans are set each year as part of the council's overall business planning process. These are monitored and reported quarterly to the Executive Leadership Team and Directorate Management Teams respectively.

Equality actions and progress monitoring are embedded within this process. All Directorate Plans must include this action:

- Services in the directorate will use data, engagement and EIAs to identify differences in access or outcome for service-users relating to their legally protected characteristics and prioritise areas for action. This should include: planning, completion, implementation and outcome monitoring in all services; implementation of budget EIAs; engagement contributing to service improvement; defined priority gaps in outcomes are removed or reduced. (Measures of success: EIAs are delivered to agreed timetable; budget EIAs are completed and actions implemented; and any other specific equalities targets for the service). There may be some directorate specific actions and targets that your Directorate Equalities Group can help identify.

As part of our legal duty we meet annually with the community and voluntary sector to describe progress against these actions and hear feedback.

To achieve excellence:

We will ensure that we better monitor outcomes and can demonstrate how our actions are leading to improvements.

1.3 Procurement and Contracts

All contracts and service agreements include arrangements which make sure our funded providers are able to meet our legal duties for equality and inclusion. This includes a requirement to monitor services by protected characteristic and use this to inform service improvement. In addition the council's commitment to [social value](#) ensures that where possible and applicable our contracts secure additional outcomes for vulnerable groups including for example, training and employment opportunities.

To achieve excellence:

We will look for opportunities to use the provisions of the Social Value Act and Framework to address inequalities, design better services, find new solutions and improve outcomes.

1.4 Customer feedback

In 2016-17 the customer insight data gathering guidance was revised and advises services to analyse customer satisfaction survey results, particularly in relation to protected characteristics. Any observations around equalities (e.g. that customers aged 18–24 were less satisfied on the whole than those aged 65+) should be reported through Interplan (the council's performance monitoring system) annually, along with actions to address any disproportionate under or over representation of particular groups. This will then also enable organisation-wide analysis of customer satisfaction by protected characteristics for necessary improvement actions to be taken.

To support services in ensuring that they aren't disadvantaging any particular group, the Customer Feedback team (CFT) will drill down further into areas of complaint and compare the profile of the complainants with their case-load data to ascertain if there are disproportionate numbers of complaints from any group CFT can then support the service to address any areas of concern.

To achieve excellence:

We will move more customer contact from unstructured emails to an online form and embed gathering of equalities information.

1.5 Digital First

Our aim is to make everything we do as customer focused as we can, providing digital services based on the needs of the people who live, work and visit the city of Brighton & Hove. We want to improve people's experiences of online services.

A small team of web developers, designers, writers and editors are working with various teams and services across the council to redesign how we deliver our services to citizens and to develop new online customer focused services. We are developing a

customer account area, where you can see council services in one place, and simplifying our online forms

To achieve excellence:

We will ensure that alternative communication routes remain available for people with specific requirements.

We will also ensure that digital options are adaptable and comply with digital standards of accessibility.

2. Inclusive employer

We aim for a workforce that is:

- More closely representative of the communities we serve
- skilled, capable and motivated to deliver the best services for everyone in the city
- confident and skilled in achieving council priorities
- focused on continually improving performance

We also aim to build a more inclusive workplace culture in which everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their potential.

We will do this in the following ways:

2.1 [Workforce Equality Action Plan \(WEAP\)](#)

This Plan is the council's response to the findings of a council-commissioned external assessment of the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees. The findings identified specific issues in relation to race equality, but many (about broader performance and cultural issues) were also relevant to other equality groups in the workforce.

It supports the council's modernisation agenda and the associated culture change programme. It describes how the organisation will improve equality in employment within the overall framework of this Equality and Inclusion Policy Statement and Strategy.

Progress against the WEAP is monitored through a dedicated Workforce Equalities Group (WEG) that meets on a quarterly basis. This group comprises representatives from the Staff Workers' Forums; Trade Unions; Human Resources & Organisational Development; and the Communities, Equality & Third Sector and Communications teams.

The current WEAP has the following five priorities:

- Use positive action to build a workforce which has an equality profile that broadly reflects the economically active population within the City

- Use robust employment data to inform the council's workforce strategy to improve employment outcomes¹ for staff of all equality groups
- Have a framework of employment policies and procedures that are compliant with equalities legislation and best practice and which managers apply consistently to promote equality in the workplace
- Mainstream equalities within all learning and development activity to ensure that employees understand their individual equality duties, and have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve
- Build an inclusive workplace culture in which employees across all equality groups show high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the council as an employer

To achieve excellence:

We will continue to implement the Workforce Equality Action Plan (WEAP), monitor and report progress against its aims to the workforce and wider community and respond to where we are not achieving.

We will identify how services across the council can contribute to the WEAP's aims and will provide support to enable them to achieve tangible outcomes.

2.2 A skilled, capable and motivated workforce working to deliver the council's priorities

The council's Workforce Development Team provides a blended approach to equality and diversity learning and development, using both online learning and skills workshops. Equality and diversity is integrated into all modules of the council's learning and development programme to help staff provide fair and consistent customer service and work effectively in a diverse workforce.

Having developed our corporate values and used a management development programme to develop the shared vision for the organisation, the second phase of the programme will focus on performance; looking beyond what we do, to how we do it, to get the best outcome. It will also ensure that issues related to unconscious bias will be addressed.

To achieve excellence:

We will introduce our new behaviour framework, which will be supported by a range of tools and opportunities for discussion for staff and managers, including short courses, toolkits, guidance and e-learning.

We will also identify areas across the council which will receive focused equality learning and development; revise and improve our e-learning offer; and increase opportunities for formal and informal equality learning opportunities, to encourage conversations and engagement on how equality and inclusion work in practice.

2.3 A robust set of Human Resources policies and procedures

¹ 'Employment outcomes' means both increasing the diversity of people employed by the council, ensuring that progression, secondment and other opportunities are fairly available, and that policies are fairly applied.

The recent Equality Framework for Local Government assessment stated that we have a robust set of employment policy and procedures that promote equality by providing support for staff and providing a legal and best practice framework to enable managers to promote equality when recruiting and managing their staff. Policies include:

- Recruitment and selection
- Attendance management
- Performance management
- Reasonable adjustments guidance
- Supporting transgender employees
- Dignity and respect at work

To achieve excellence:

We will increase awareness of policies and procedures, targeting interventions and support where data suggests policies are being applied inconsistently.

2.4 Performance monitoring

Equality actions and progress monitoring are embedded within our service planning process. For 2017-18 all Service Plans must include the following:

- Service managers will actively support the corporate aim of diversifying the workforce, recruiting and retaining staff from all the city's communities (Measures of success: Actions taken to increase diversity (eg: job fairs, positive actions statements etc), numbers of people recruited and percentage of those who are BME and disabled at application, interview and appointment stages as monitored by HR, percentage of managers who recruit who have been trained)

2.4 Performance Development Plans (PDP)

PDPs encourage a review of successes and challenges over the previous six months, provide an opportunity for managers and staff to give and receive feedback, and enable the setting of planned objectives with time frames.

These specifically reference equality questions within the context of the 'respect' value. They contain guidance questions and prompts for managers and staff to encourage discussion.

To achieve excellence:

We will introduce new methods of assessing performance and improve rates of PDP completion and the standard of PDPs.

3. Services that understand our diverse population

Brighton & Hove has a very specific and diverse population. Understanding better who lives and works in the city and who visits it enables us to plan and deliver services that anticipate and meet people's needs better.

We aim to:

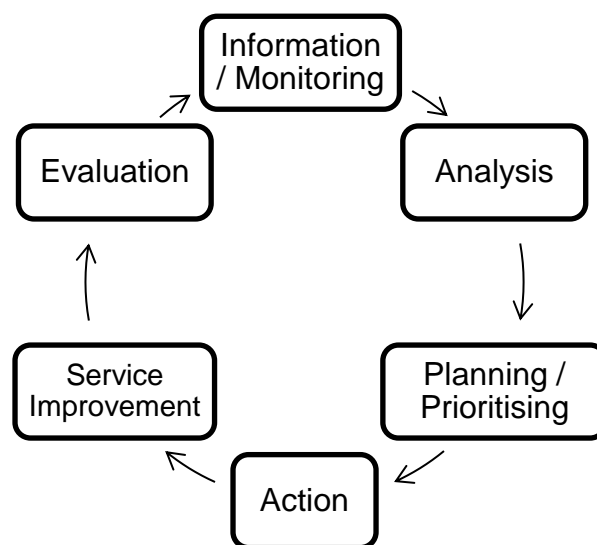
- deepen our understanding about the diverse and changing communities in the city through needs assessments and data, as well as through engagement and on-going relationships
- be creative and confident in engaging with diverse residents and partners by having the right approach and skills in our workforce
- embed learning approaches to ensure that customer feedback is used to improve services.

We will do this in the following ways:

3.1 Monitoring and analysis of equality data

By law the council must consider how different people will be affected by the decisions we make and services we provide.

After we collect equality data we analyse it to find out about our service users. We can compare data on different communities in the city; see whether there are differences in which people know about services; which use them; what they think of them; and the difference this makes to their lives.



We then take action to address any barriers or gaps to help the service meet different people's needs better. Through our data analysis we can demonstrate that we have identified, considered and responded to diverse needs, and improved services wherever possible.

To achieve excellence:

We will make more of the data we have. We will analyse it so it informs service planning and delivery; helps us identify who is and is not accessing our services; and to identify who could be getting more from them.

3.2 Communities and Third Sector Policy and Investment

The Communities & Third Sector Policy sets out the council's recognition of, and need for, resilient communities and a thriving and diverse Third Sector (Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups in the city).

The Third Sector Investment Programme brings together investment from across the council and the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to fund communities directly and capacity building support for CVS organisations, with the aim of developing the assets of people in communities. This means investing in support for communities so they can create their own solutions, with and without public sector organisations.

We also invest in the Third Sector, as a bridge to the most disadvantaged people and those who do not traditionally access council services.

The council seeks to involve all parts of our community in the design, review and scrutiny of service delivery. The council recognises the unique role the sector plays in tackling inequality and promoting inclusion.

As part of the council's changing approach we understand that we will need to release and share more of the control that we have traditionally held. We will need to build more collaborative relationships with community and voluntary groups and communities. By designing, producing and delivering services together we aim to empower and enable residents from all communities to build on and increase their own resources and assets and take action across the city.

To achieve this, the council's [Collaboration Programme](#) aims to transform our approach, providing a strategy that will encourage and support 'active citizenship', volunteering and communities working together and with us.

Furthermore, the programme aims to support service redesign and develop the right staff skills, systems and processes to become a council where we act with our residents and communities not for them.

To achieve excellence:

We will establish stronger links with BME groups and communities so we work better together, hear different people's views, and learn from what is working well or not.

We will also work more closely with the faith sector to ensure we hear from people of all faiths and none.

3.3 Needs Assessments and Community Insight

The city's [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) provides a comprehensive analysis of the current and future needs of local people. It is used to inform the commissioning of services that will improve outcomes for residents and reduce inequality. Needs assessments collate and analyse local data and evidence from the public, patients, service users and professionals, and include a review of local and national research and best practice. The JSNA programme specifically considers the needs and assets of vulnerable groups including those with protected characteristics.

[Community Insight](#) is a free online tool available to anyone to use. It maps data available at city, ward, neighbourhood and street level, including equalities data where available. The site also allows users to look at data (for example, numbers of children) for their neighbourhood through the ability to draw bespoke neighbourhoods.

There are also a number of specific projects which provide an opportunity for engagement and shared understanding of available data to better understand the local population and their specific needs. Examples include:

- The [Trans Needs Assessment \(TNA\) 2015](#) highlighted not only the level of discrimination and prejudice ongoing in our city, but also the strengths of the local trans community and the opportunities for action.
- Representatives from the city's Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities worked with the council, Sussex Police and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to better understand the city's growing BME population. The [Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Brighton & Hove: a snapshot report](#) 2015, led to additional research to understand barriers to employment in the city.
- [2015 Disability in Brighton & Hove](#) report (based on the social model of disability) provides an accessible overview of local and national statistics and trends about disabled people living, working or studying in Brighton & Hove.

To achieve excellence:

We will continue to work with residents, partners and others to identify and complete needs assessments on different groups so that we keep an up-to-date picture of the city's populations.

4. Strong and Fair Leadership

We aim to provide leadership that is –

- focussed on tackling inequality, promoting fairness and inclusion
- trusted to make fair decisions
- able to balance competing interests and priorities in the city
- confident in its role in improving relations between communities

We will do this in the following ways:

4.1 Fairness Commission

In 2015 an independent [Fairness Commission](#) was set up to explore how to make Brighton & Hove a fairer and more equal place to live and work. The Commission heard the concerns of diverse residents, community groups and businesses across the city. It concluded that whilst the city was thriving economically there were considerable issues related to poverty, inequality and fairness for many residents. In particular it found that child poverty remained a significant issue for families across the city and continues to affect life chances.

The findings of the Commission will influence how the council's budgets are spent over the next three years to tackle inequality and increase opportunities. *[Currently being prioritised and action plan developed so be will appended to this strategy when available].*

4.2 Strategies

As new strategies are developed or existing ones revised, we ensure that an equality impact assessment process is used, so that differences in prevalence, impact, access or outcome for people in relation to their protected characteristics are identified and

addressed. Actions can then be tailored to meet these differences and to effectively and appropriately target interventions to meet needs.

To achieve excellence:

We will ensure that actions from strategies are appropriately prioritised, so that they can be implemented effectively and their impacts monitored.

4.3 Budget EIA process

Each year as we set our annual budget we use Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to ensure we meet our [public sector equality duties](#) under the Equality Act 2010. We assess the impact of budget proposals and changes to services on protected groups, and define actions to reduce negative impacts and increase positive outcomes. Budget EIAs are considered by elected members as part of the decision-making process and in addition a cumulative impact assessment is presented as part of the papers for budget council.

Understanding communities' views is essential and before final decisions are taken on budget decisions we consult with partners and community groups. These range from consultation events to community and partner representation on service review boards.

Mitigating actions are monitored and reported on through our performance system. In addition we report progress on our equality work through an annual event with community and voluntary groups.

To achieve excellence:

We will continue this process so that all decisions about budget proposals are informed by due regard to their impacts.

We will also use any opportunities to share impacts and analyses with other city partners and look for where proposals from different organisations may have cumulative effects.

4.4 Ward Councillors

The role of Ward Councillors is to represent and understand the diversity and needs of people living within their wards and engage with residents and groups on a wide range of issues. They contribute to the development of council policies and strategies, including budget setting, and may be involved in scrutinising council decisions or taking decisions on planning or licensing applications.

Equality lead councillors have a specific role in challenging inequality by sharing information, ideas and innovations to create solutions that help increase inclusion and fairness across the city.

In addition, the [Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities \(NCE\) Committee](#) has overall responsibility for the council's approach to communities and neighbourhoods, the third sector, community safety and resilience, equalities and inclusion. The NCE committee can call other council committees to account; can make decisions itself and make recommendations to the most appropriate body – including agencies outside the council. Representatives from the voluntary and community sector are included as standing members of the committee, however representatives from communities, local action teams and other community forums are also

invited, where relevant, to attend and speak at the committee. The committee is also open to questions at any time.

Ward councillors, with council officers, also have a role in bridging divides between communities, both geographical and from any other cause, to support and develop the sense of common identity and purpose in the city. Strong measures to address inequality and hate crime are central to this, along with awareness of how national and international events can impact on local people and increase or reduce tensions, anxieties and opportunities.

5. Effective partnership working to reduce inequality

We aim to:

- Increase sharing of data, knowledge and skills in relation to equality work to benefit the city
- reduce duplication and join up provision so that everyone has access to fair services
- Increase joint action on key city-wide equality issues

We will do this in the following ways:

5.1 Partnership working

The council has a strong history of working with the local community and voluntary sector and recognises the specialist role that it plays in tackling inequality through strong roots in service user involvement, community engagement and fighting social injustice. This is reflected in the council's [Communities & Third Sector Policy](#).

The council also recognises our diverse private sector and range of opportunities and services it offers the people who live and work in the city. With a large proportion of small to medium sized businesses, we work in partnership to support them in promoting cohesion and sustainability.

The city wide Needs Assessment Steering Group brings together the council's public health team with key public sector partners to ensure that the needs assessment programme is cross cutting.

[Brighton & Hove Connected](#) is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the city which brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors including health, universities and the police. It enables initiatives and services to support one another and work together more effectively to increase engagement and reduce inequality.

Within the overarching partnership the [Equality & Inclusion Partnership](#) (Equip) is the city-wide, cross-sector group that leads improvements in community engagement and equality. Specifically, it drives collaborative working between public services and communities, to reduce inequality and foster community resilience and activity.

The council is involved on a number of sub groups which report to Equip. These groups deliver priorities of the Partnership and include:

- Trans Equality Sub Group
- BME Needs Assessment Steering Group
- Disability Needs Assessment Steering Group
- City-wide overview group: for mitigating and planning for welfare reforms
- International Migrants Needs Assessment

The council also supports other groups to meet across the city to ensure that we enable a wide range of people to have a voice, including:

- [Racial Harassment Forum](#)
- [LGBT Community Safety Forum](#)
- [Learning Disability Partnership](#)
- [Youth Council](#)
- [Older People's Council](#)

To achieve excellence:

We will continue to identify opportunities for working with partners across the city to share information, use all our skills most effectively and act on what local people from all the city's communities tell us.

5.2 Internal equality champions and groups that drive equality and inclusion across the council

- *Executive Leadership Team (ELT)*

Provides leadership on diversity issues; champions, promotes and leads by example and encourages the integration of equality, diversity and cohesion principles in all of the council's functions.

- *Equality Steering Group (ESG)*

A quarterly meeting of senior equalities champions to look strategically at equality issues. They influence and shape policy and service changes and promote the council's commitment to valuing diversity through their service areas. The ESG is a forum for reflection, strategic planning and sharing best practice.

- *Workforce Equality Group (WEG)*

This group meets quarterly, with representation from our staff networks, trade unions and key officers across the council with lead responsibility for equalities work in relation to our workforce. The group oversees and supports progress of the Workforce Equality Action Plan and provides a space for debate and challenge on the council's progress in achieving its equality and diversity objectives for the workforce.

- *Staff Networks for BME, LGBT and Disabled staff, Women and Carers*

The council continues to work hard to create a working environment which is inclusive and able to value the talents and contributions of our diverse workforce. The staff networks are an essential part of this work.

The networks provide a mechanism for mutual support and the opportunity for staff to be a strong voice within the workplace by sharing common experiences, discussing their needs, and providing feedback on the development of policies and initiatives. Staff are encouraged to participate in the networks.

- *Directorate Equality Groups (DEG)*

A representative from each service within a directorate who has responsibility for equalities work as part of their wider role meet regularly to discuss service and workforce issues and to monitor progress of equality actions. Meetings feed into Directorate Management Teams and the Executive Leadership Team.

- *Communities, Equality & Third Sector function*

Brings together effective leadership, expert advice and high quality services that enable the council to achieve:

- Transformative community engagement and collaboration that strengthens communities, improves public service outcomes and supports the changing relationship between citizen and state
- Excellent equality practice that ensures the authority meets its equality duties, leads by example and effectively reduces inequality
- A more sustainable, efficient and effective community and voluntary sector delivering council priorities

H. Accountability and Communication

The council recognises that it needs to demonstrate and report on progress and impact in achieving the aims of this strategy. Communicating our work not only allows us to demonstrate how we are delivering on our equality and inclusion objectives but also enables us to collect and use feedback on the difference this makes or improvements that are still required. It also helps the council to build relationships with communities, increase awareness of council services and jobs, and foster good relations across and between communities in the city.

We will do this in the following ways:

H1. External assessment

The council takes part in various external assessment methods as part of its commitment to review and improve performance in relation to equality and diversity.

The [Equality Framework for Local Government](#) (EFLG) is a nationally accredited process run by the [Local Government Association](#) enabling local authorities to demonstrate and strengthen their commitment to equalities duties. It assesses all the council's functions and considers all characteristics protected by the law.

The council has also taken part in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (SWEI) on many occasions and obtained top local authority status twice in the last six years. We remain committed in progressing our equalities work and supportive of the work of Stonewall, however in order to focus resources on the best approach to ensuring equality outcomes for our staff, service users and the community, we review our participation in the SWEI annually.

H2. Monitoring Equality and Inclusion

Underpinning this strategy are actions defined annually in service and directorate plans. These describe in detail what we are doing across services to deliver this strategy and also define measures of success. Reporting is through the council's business planning and monitoring system, known as 'Interplan', which is updated quarterly and reviewed by Directorate Management Teams.

H3. Proactive Communication

We use our communications methods to deliver our equality priorities, respond to the needs of our communities and foster good relations. This is essential to achieving our equality and inclusion objectives. We do this in the following ways:

- Formal engagement arrangements with particular communities
- Regular press releases and statements about our work
- Consultation on this strategy and on our progress towards its objective

I. For more information

Further details of our work are available upon request, and we welcome and encourage your feedback.

Contact: Sarah Tighe-Ford, Equalities Co-ordinator

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If you would like this strategy in an alternative format please contact equalities@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 [public sector equality duty \(PSED\)](#) requires the council to show how we have paid conscious attention to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out all our activities.

The Act defines the 'protected' characteristics that these duties specifically apply to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and paternity

- Race / ethnicity
- Religion and belief
- Sex / gender
- Sexual orientation

The council also recognises that there are a range of other groups that may face additional disadvantage and discrimination. These include:

Carers, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel and people on the Autistic spectrum.

For more information on the Equality Act: [click this hyperlink](#)