

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 18

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Equalities & Inclusion update		
Date of Meeting:	14th July 2009		
Report of:	Director of Strategy & Governance		
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Equalities & Inclusion Policy sets out policy and priorities for the next three years 2008-2011 and actions arising are set out in the Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- 1.2 At Overview & Scrutiny Commission on 15th July 2008 a six-monthly update was requested. This report contains the update and sets out work for the next six months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members note the achievements to date and agree proposed action

3. EQUALITIES & INCLUSION UPDATE

3.1 Equalities Standard: Achievement and Areas for Improvement

The Peer Challenge was undertaken on the 30th and 31st March and it was confirmed that we have achieved Level 3 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A showing the comments made in relation to areas of strength and areas for improvement and our plans to address them.

3.2 Equalities Framework: Next steps

- 3.2.1 The Equalities Standard for Local Government has now been replaced by a new Equalities Framework which has a greater focus on measurable outcomes and a stronger alignment to the Comprehensive Area Assessment. The new Framework has three levels; Developing, Achieving and Excellent. As we have achieved level 3 of the Equalities Standard we automatically are deemed as an Achieving authority. We propose that the authority aim to achieve Excellent status by December 2010.

3.2.2 The Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) describes an Excellent Authority as having the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to their communities are embedded in their sustainable community strategy, strategic plans, local area agreements (LAAs) and local delivery plans.
- It works with all strategic partners and the voluntary and community sector, acting as an advocate to achieve defined equality outcomes.
- It has good evidence of the equalities profile of the community based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed.
- It is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment.
- It identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.
- It provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities.
- It has improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community and staff.
- Equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes.
- There are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the authority's progress.
- All parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities and narrow the gaps.
- It has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under-representation, flexible working, access to training and development. It promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect.
- It reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative improvement challenges.
- Through its achievements, it is an exemplar of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and works with others to share best practice.

3.2.3 The Council's Equalities Steering Group are in the process of undertaking a gap analysis against the new criteria and will develop an action plan to address shortfalls.

3.3 City Inclusion Partnership

The City Inclusion Partnership (CIP) has now held 3 meetings with representation from the council, a good range of other public sector statutory partners and the Stronger Communities Partnership.

The work programme is underway with sub-groups led by the different partners taking responsibility for the various actions and feeding back to the main meeting.

This includes a group led by the Council which is working towards the development

of a Single Equality Scheme for the city. All the documentation and meetings of the meetings are available via the Council's website.

Formal adoption by the LSP is still timed for September 2009 and the CIP is working with other partners to ensure that equalities and inclusion issues are addressed within the Sustainable Community Strategy refresh.

4. EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

4.2 The Equality Scheme Action Plan contains the outstanding actions from our Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes with additional actions linked to the new Equality and Inclusion Policy 2008-2011. Attached as Appendix B is the Action Plan with updates on progress

4.3 Any outstanding areas of work will transfer into the new city-wide Single Equality Scheme as actions for the Council.

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) continues to be a priority area for action. The Council has made significant progress in this area over the last year and EIAs have been completed according to our corporate timetable. The EIA performance report is attached as Appendix C and the timetable and EIA summaries are available on the council's Internet.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 None directly in relation to this report as all costs to be met by existing budgets

Legal Implications:

5.2 Our statutory responsibilities in relation to equalities are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the Equality Scheme Action Plan.

Equalities Implications:

5.3 The equalities implications are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the Equalities Scheme Action Plan.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 None directly in relation to this report

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Partnership Community Safety Team are key contributors to equalities & inclusion work in the city and this is reflected in the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the Equalities Scheme Action Plan

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 The implications for risk are directly addressed by the Equalities & Inclusion Policy and the Equalities Scheme Action Plan.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The Equality Scheme Action Plan has been developed with input from all council Directorates.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Appendix A - Diversity Peer Challenge report

Appendix B – Equalities Scheme Action Plan 2009 Progress report

Appendix C – EIA Performance Report Year 1 until 1 April 2009