

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 6

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Single Equality Scheme update		
Date of Meeting:	8 June 2010	Overview & Scrutiny Commission	
	17 June 2010	Cabinet	
Report of:	Director of Strategy & Governance		
Contact Officer:	Name: Mary Evans	Tel: 29-1577	
	E-mail: mary.evans@brighton-hove.gov.uk		
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Single Equality Scheme is closely linked to our Corporate Plan 2008-11 in which we undertook to design services around needs, be these city-wide or tailored to the needs of particular communities, families or individuals; providing choice wherever possible.
- 1.2 “Working Towards an Equal City” is the council’s framework for our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. This policy builds on the city’s shared experiences and lessons learnt, and describes both our achievements so far and our aims for the future. It describes how we will work, both independently and with our partners, towards achieving our goals for improving the lives of the city’s residents through reducing the inequality often experienced by some of our vulnerable communities.
- 1.3 The Single Equality Scheme contributes to this policy framework and describes how the council will meet its moral, social and legal obligations to put equality at the heart of everything we do. Based on a range of consultation and data, it updates our council priorities for the next two years: January 2010 until December 2012. Actions arising from these priorities are set out within its Action Plan. The scheme was approved by Cabinet on 11 February 2010.
- 1.4 The sections of the Single Equality Scheme also mirror the five performance areas of the Equality Framework for Local Government. This enables us to also evidence how we are progressing against this national performance improvement and benchmarking tool. The areas are: Knowing your communities and equality mapping; Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment; Community engagement and satisfaction; Responsive services and customer care; and A modern and diverse workforce
- 1.5 At Overview & Scrutiny Commission a six-monthly update was requested of the action plan. This report updates progress made so far against the action plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the ongoing work to reduce inequality across the city and progress made so far against the objectives set out in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- 2.2 That Overview and Scrutiny Commission comment on the progress report.

3. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN - BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Single Equality Scheme included a new action plan. This was based on extensive consultation and addresses key priorities across all the equalities strands including economic disadvantage. It is intended to be focused enough to be easily understood and monitored and to include actions which will have significant impact. The progress report is attached as Appendix A.

Over Arching Actions for Promoting Equality

- 3.2 For the council to achieve 'Excellent Level' of the Equality Framework for Local Government by December 2010 we must have a robust and transparent Equality Impact Assessment process that leads to actual outcomes from assessments. The assessments must include evidence and engagement and influence the way in which we are delivering services to meet the needs of our diverse communities within the city.
- 3.3 Currently we are progressing through the agreed Equality Impact Assessment Timetable. This timetable was set for three years (2008-2010) and we are working with services to review their areas and update the timetable with any new or changes to services, policies or strategies for the next three year period (2011-2013).
- 3.4 Summaries of completed Equality Impact Assessments can be found on the council's main WebPages, these summaries give an overview of the full assessments by detailing key outcomes and actions on how outcomes will be implemented to improve the service or policy. These outcomes are used as equality objectives through the business planning process to ensure a thorough monitoring and reviewing process.
- 3.5 Below are some examples of outcomes whereby the Equality Impact Assessment process has made improvements:

Following the EIA conducted at Glenwood Lodge, staff and residents identified that the No Visitors Policy could be preventing residents from maintaining family and personal relationships. Following consultation with residents, a pilot scheme for allowing visitors to the hostel has been successfully established and is likely to be extended.

As a result of EIA, Learning Disability Accommodation Services have set up service user forums and are currently consulting with staff and service users to try and remove barriers to attendance. A draft consultation policy and procedure has been drawn up and software has been bought to enable services to produce service user friendly information.

Ravensbourne Court Sheltered Housing is piloting a scheme where the scheme manager, provides not only support to tenants living in the scheme but also to older people living in the local community by going out to them in their homes. In addition the older people come to the scheme to join in activities and this has provided opportunities to encourage friendships, inclusion and social interaction.

Disabled Parking Bay applications - improvements to process of applying for a disabled parking bay, including removal of requirement to undergo additional assessment, and including the form on our website.

Development of partnership work with the Brighton & Hove Black History project, reflected in range of activities for Black History Month (including Caribbean Day, film screenings, a celebration event, children's drama, story-telling and craft) and advertising their collection of BME biographies among their other resources.

As a result of feedback from staff and assisted collection service users, the council is reviewing the entire assisted refuse and recycling collection process. This is to ensure that the service is designed for the people that really need it and provided to the people that really need it. Consultation with Federation of Disabled People, Older People's Council and current service users.

Promoting Equality through our Partnership Working

3.6 The statutory services in the city are committed to promoting and upholding Equality and Human rights through the new Equality and Human rights charter, developed by the City Inclusion Partnership. The charter was launched on the 12 January this year and will be reviewed in January of 2011.

3.7 Signatories of Brighton and Hove Equality and Human Rights Charter:

- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals
- City College Brighton and Hove
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
- Job Centre Plus
- Learning and Skills Council Sussex
- NHS Brighton and Hove
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Sussex Police
- Sussex Probation Service
- South Downs Health NHS Trust
- South East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust

The City Inclusion Partnership has agreed a new work programme which includes actions to address data gaps and support community engagement as well as joint work with the Stronger Communities Partnership to address issues of “chronic exclusion”. The CIP Workplan 2010 is attached as Appendix B.

- 3.8 **New post for Preventing Violent Extremism work** – The community and outreach worker had been in post since 19th November 09. In addition to this, the Community Safety Manager (Hate Crime and Prevent) manages the PREVENT area of work. The worker has been doing some groundbreaking work to engage with Muslim organisations, community groups and individuals regarding needs and priorities of the community. Some of the priorities identified have already been progressed.
- 3.9 In addition to this, work is currently ongoing with the Muslim women on a Parenting project, three meetings have been held and further meetings are planned.
- 3.10 We are also engaging with the schools to identify potential vulnerabilities to extremism and to develop care pathways to support vulnerable young people. Work has also started with the three 6th form colleges with regard to joint work around Prevent.

Promoting Equality through Community Engagement

- 3.11 **The Get Involved Campaign** came about to promote the role of the councillor, obtain the views of residents on civic matters and publicise existing e-government facilities at the council, such as web casting, e-petitions and social media.
- 3.12 The campaign was launched at a special event on the 21st November 2010, which sought to engage people in new and different ways including a Question Time Event ‘Speed meet your councillor’ for young people and a young people’s question time.
- 3.13 The Community Engagement Framework sub group allocated a small budget to support ‘widening engagement’ in Get involved activities, such as supporting the Federation of Disabled Persons at their Disability Summit Event, there are also proposals for bids of the funding for Democratic Engagement Events.
- 3.14 The **Get Involved Group (GIG) of disabled people** is funded by NHS Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove City Council to deliver user involvement across a range of services, from reviewing the Single Equality Schemes to contributing to Equality Impact Assessments. The partnership is currently in the process of including Brighton & Sussex University Hospital Trust and updating the Service level agreement to agree smart targets for the forth coming year.
- 3.15 Joint consultation exercises are held regularly between the council, the NHS and the GIG. They are designed to avoid consultation fatigue on the part of disabled people by discussing issues common to the public sector (i.e. accessing

information) or complementary similar projects (using EIA's to influence decision making).

- 3.16 The GIG identified that disabled people/children were unable to access the beach, in particular wheelchair users. Joint working with CYPT, the Seafront Office, & Sensory Services led to a couple of members of the GIG accompanying BHCC officers to another resort to see how wheelchair users could manage a 'boardwalk' across the shingle. There was also a site visit to the Seafront Office by a group of wheelchair users and other disabled people in order to trial an all-terrain wheelchair. As a result we now have 2 beach wheelchairs available free to children or adults bookable via the seafront office. We are soon to have an innovative boardwalk trialled across the sea dump near King Alfreds.
- 3.17 Disabled people were concerned about A boards and other obstacles to pedestrians, blind and partially sighted people, wheelchair and scooter-users. Officers attended a GIG focus group at Shopmobility to discuss issues and possible solutions. A new policy was developed for street licensing and enforcement improved. The GIG will maintain a watching brief of street clutter and report back any continuing problems

Promoting Equality in our Service Delivery

- 3.18 The following progress is just some examples from our service areas in how we have promoted equality through our service delivery; **Appendix A** of this document outlines in greater detail the examples below, and other progress that has been made in service delivery.
- By April 2010 the target of 75% of all council buildings to be accessible to disabled people as far as is reasonably possible has been met.
 - We have increased the capacity for customers to receive services appropriate to their needs through the Independent Living new extra housing schemes.
 - Exceeded targets for new affordable homes with 234 developed in 2009-10, and have halved the number of households in temporary accommodation 2005-2010.
 - We have achieved the top quartile for energy efficiency in our council homes, and in the private sector housing have exceeded our 2009/10 Fuel poverty targets through decreasing proportion of households on benefits in energy efficient homes.
 - A new wayfinding and mapping system has recently been installed in the centre of Brighton, this scheme has been expanded to offer wayfinding and visitor information to residents and visitors with visual impairments.
 - We have improved service for children at risk and children with special needs or with a disability through the Tamhs Project which has developed an online tool that is used to identify and assess children who may be socially isolated or have emotional/mental health concerns.
 - We have improved our enforcement around Blue Badge use and parking across dropped kerbs by carrying our regular checks on Validity of Blue Badge holders.
 - During 2009/10 there has been a positive increase in the number of people accessing Self Directed Support, and we have seen significant development

towards the completed implementation of SDS by April 2012. Direct Payments for Service Users has increased by over a 3rd, from 260 to 402. Carers receiving SDS represents 1 in 5 carers receiving support via an SDS option. Over 10% of all service users/carers supported by ASC have received their support via an SDS option, which is in line with the Putting People First milestones. ASC started a phased introduction of Indicative Budgets and Support Planning in November 09, which resulted in an additional 164 people receiving an SDS option to support their needs.

- ASC piloted a new approach called “Outcome-focused homecare” which enabled service users with one of the approved providers to have greater control over the support they received and their desired outcomes.

Promoting Equality in Employment

3.19 The council’s Human Resources section has been working on the following key objectives in relation to equality in employment issues:-

- Reducing the pay gap between men and women
- Building a workforce profile that is reflective of our communities
- A review of memorandum of all staff forums to build a consistent and effective approach
- Providing relevant training to managers, introducing a new foundation mandatory e-learning package for managers

3.20 The latest workforce composition figures are attached as **Appendix C** of this report which show that we have met our council-wide targets for all equality groups.

4. CONSULTATION:

4.1 The Single Equality Scheme was developed from a range of consultation and data sources, including feedback we received to our Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, and consultation with staff, local and national organisations and representative groups.

4.2 In October - December 2009, with Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, we carried out a programme of consultation and engagement in order to shape this Scheme. We held 8 public consultation events, and conducted a public online consultation.

4.3 We were particularly keen to reach seldom-heard-from groups in order to ensure our findings were relevant to diverse groups. To do this, we asked for views at the Older People’s Day, the Get Involved Day, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Elders’ Day, and ran targeted events for men, BME communities and the Federation of Disabled People. Community and Voluntary Sector groups were also sent the Scheme to comment on, as were the council staff forums and unions.

- 4.4 As well as the public consultation events, approximately 30 members of the Get Involved Group (jointly funded with the PCT) attended a workshop in order to help us clarify the issues for disabled people across all impairment groups.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The activities and resources described in this report are met from agreed council budgets and partnership funding.

Finance Officer consulted: Anne Silley Date: 20/05/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council has a legal duty to produce an Equalities Scheme covering Disability, Gender and Race and the Council's Single Equalities scheme meets the current statutory requirements.
- 5.3 The Equalities Act 2010 is coming into force in stages from October 2010 and this will extend our responsibilities to include the Public Sector Equalities Duty. It will be necessary to review the Council's Single Equalities Scheme against the new requirements (which will require secondary legislation not yet enacted) in preparation for the introduction of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

Lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date: 27th May 2010

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The equalities implications are directly addressed by the work contained within the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 None directly in relation to this report

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 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 single Equality Scheme action plan

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 The implications for risk are directly addressed by the actions contained within the report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 The actions contained within the report have been developed with input from all council Directorates.

6. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

6.1 Councils are required to produce schemes relating to the equality groups covered by legislation. The alternative to a single scheme is to produce multiple schemes (one for each of the 6 equality strands, plus carers, socio-economic disadvantage and others). However, this was not considered appropriate, as it creates significant duplication and would not effectively address issues of cross-cutting disadvantage or multiple discrimination. Therefore it was decided to develop one Single Equality Scheme.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It was agreed that six-monthly reports would be made on progress against the Single Equality Scheme to be discussed and noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix A: Single Equality Scheme Action Plan – Progress Report June 2010
2. Appendix B: City Inclusion Partnership Work Programme 2010
3. Appendix C: Equalities Statistics by Directorate

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents:

None