

Subject:	Establishment of the Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission		
Date of Meeting:	20 July 2015		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Matthew Wragg	Tel: 29-3944
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The council's Corporate Plan describes how spending for public services in the city is reducing at the same time as demand for services is rising, the local population growing and changing, and personal needs becoming more complex. Public services are committed, through Brighton & Hove Connected, to changing the way they provide services and with citizens.
- 1.2 Policy & Resources Committee received an initial report at their meeting on 11th June 2015, which put forward the case for and agreed the establishment of a fairness commission for Brighton & Hove. Minutes from that discussion are attached at Appendix 1
- 1.3 This report provides further context along with additional detail on the ways of working for the Brighton & Hove fairness commission, along with draft terms of reference (Appendix 2), for consideration by Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee recommends to the Acting Chief Executive that the ways of working for the Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission contained within this report are adopted; and
- 2.2 That the Committee recommends to the Acting Chief Executive that the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2 are adopted.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Policy & Resources Committee received an initial report at their meeting on 11th June 2015, which put forward the case for and agreed the establishment of a fairness commission for Brighton & Hove. Minutes from that discussion are attached.

- 3.2 This report provides further context along with additional detail on the ways of working for the Brighton & Hove fairness commission, along with draft terms of reference (Appendix 2), for consideration by Committee.

Inequality in Brighton & Hove

- 3.3 The city's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Brighton & Hove City Council Corporate Plan 2015-19 both highlight the need for and commit to increase equality across communities of the city, addressing limitations in life chances for certain individuals.
- 3.4 Additionally, the new 2014-15 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, [Look Inequality](#), takes as its theme inequality within the city. It brings together comprehensive detail on overall deprivation and a number of other key factors associated with inequality and poverty. This report will form a timely and key evidence base for the commission.
- 3.5 In terms of overall deprivation, it finds that Brighton & Hove is above the national average and the pattern of deprivation has changed little in the past decade. This suggests that there remains a need to find new ways to address embedded inequality and poverty in the city that continues despite periods of economic decline and growth and numerous initiatives targeted at reducing these issues.
- 3.6 The report concludes the picture of inequality is not straightforward and sometimes the findings are unexpected. There has been some improvement in some areas but in others, such as income, welfare reform, housing, secondary education and food poverty, the challenges remain substantial.
- 3.7 In terms of moving ahead it states that:
- “If we are to successfully tackle the inequalities that many people face, then a sustained, determined and coordinated approach across the city that engages people from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors as well as citizens themselves is required”.
- 3.8 A fairness commission would be one such approach to deliver this, and is an approach increasingly being used elsewhere.

Why run a Fairness Commission?

- 3.9 Based on learning from elsewhere a fairness commission offers a strong and objective forum which can create a coordinated and evidenced approach to increasing equality and would help to deliver our own Corporate Plan. The following sets out what others have done and the practical steps to establishing a fairness commission.
- 3.10 A fairness commission is a group or body of senior influencers, often independently Chaired, which explores and recommends ways to increase fairness and reduce inequality for citizens. They have been developed in response to evidence of increasing inequalities in social, economic and health conditions.

- 3.11 This report draws on fairness commissions from around the country, particularly Islington, York, Croydon, Plymouth and Southampton, and the report commissioned by the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Poverty which has analysed the fairness commission work to date across England and Wales.
- 3.12 Where they have been set up by local authorities, fairness commissions have presented a clear means of testing and informing the implications of policy and budgetary decisions proposed by those authorities.

A Fairness Commission for Brighton & Hove

- 3.13 The council's Corporate Plan describes how spending for public services in the city is reducing at the same time as demand for services is rising, the local population growing and changing, and personal needs becoming more complex. Public services are committed, through Brighton & Hove Connected, to changing the way they provide services between each other and with citizens.
- 3.14 There are already a wide range of strategies and services provided in Brighton & Hove, by the council and partners in the public, private and community and voluntary sector, to prevent and address the outcomes of inequality and poverty – and particularly to safeguard the most vulnerable.
- 3.15 The fairness commission will not only look at helping those in most need of support in our city, it will take an independent and holistic view of causes, outcomes and responses. It will look at the existing range of strategies, bring them together and review them from a fresh perspective.
- 3.16 At its conclusion the fairness commission will produce recommendations and proposals which aim to ensure that everyone in Brighton & Hove has a share in the economic success of the city, and that everyone has the opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives in financial security.

Terms of reference

- 3.17 Fairness commissions have tended to examine and make recommendations around similar types of issues. Most commissions have divided their work up into themed areas. These vary, but the most common being; health & wellbeing, jobs/pay, housing, safety, and transport. Other themes have included fuel poverty, access to services, economic growth, benefits and skills.
- 3.18 Draft terms of reference are included as Appendix 2, for consideration by Committee.
- 3.19 Terms of reference should be seen to frame and support a more in-depth process required to scope the work of the commission, which will be led by the Chair and determined by the commission itself.
- 3.20 Independent enquiry, engaging and including people, and evidences of what works should be the fundamental and governing principles of the commission (see Appendix 2, Terms of Reference).

Strategic links

- 3.21 The city has an established and effective network of thematic partnerships under the umbrella of Brighton & Hove Connected (the local strategic partnership) that bring together services and sectors to address common city issues. Brighton & Hove Connected, with the thematic partnerships, should be involved in feeding evidence into the commission to inform its work and engage in the discussion to take forward its recommendations.
- 3.22 The report of the fairness commission will provide a focus on equality and fairness for delivery and development of the council's Corporate Plan 2015-19, with meaningful emphasis on all four principles contained in the plan; Public accountability, Citizen focused, Increasing equality and Active Citizenship.
- 3.23 The council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will take a watching brief over the work of the commission. OSC will also review and respond to the recommendations of the Fairness Commission.
- 3.24 The commission will support increased understanding within the city about the nature and scale required of public service reform and the potential impact of this on fairness and equality. In exploring these issues and the solutions available the commission's work will guide policy decisions and service delivery over the remaining political term, in line with the council's budget setting and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.25 The creation of a new City Employment & Skills Plan (CESP) is about to commence, enabling young people and citizens more widely to access and become benefactors of job growth. This is directly connected to our long term regional economic plans through our Greater Brighton 'city deal' investment agreement with central government. The commission should develop its own work programme with a view to the development and emerging recommendations of the CESP.
- 3.26 Following the Brighton & Hove Living Wage Commission in 2011-12, a successful local Living Wage campaign has been established, delivered by the Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce. The Fairness Commission offers an appropriate opportunity to review progress against the considerations and recommendations of the Living Wage Commission.
- 3.27 The Health & Wellbeing Board is the accountable body for health and wellbeing in the city and aims to provide leadership across the health and social care system. One of its key responsibilities is to produce a regular Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The second strategy is in production and the fairness commission should look for appropriate ways and opportunities to link to the draft.
- 3.28 This list of strategic links should not be considered exhaustive. The fairness commission would offer a timely opportunity to review where this and a wider range of work has reached, and examine the potential further impact of continued reductions in public spending. It will aim to explore and bring a fresh perspective to the complex issues of fairness and equality in the city.

Evidence gathering

- 3.29 The commission will begin with an initial review of a range of strategies and data to inform specific themes and areas of interest for further investigation.
- 3.30 A number of existing pieces of work will be reviewed to determine the commission's work programme, including (by way of example and not provided as an exhaustive list):
- The Director of Public Health Annual Report (2015)
 - The Cumulative Impact of Welfare Reform (2015)
 - The ongoing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
 - The final report of the Living Wage Commission (2012)
 - The Brighton & Hove Child Poverty Needs Assessment & Strategy (2010)
 - The Brighton & Hove Reducing Inequality Review (2007)
- 3.31 In addition to the above, further data about inequality within the city and communities will be provided using council and partnership resources. This includes making full use of the [Community Insight](#) local intelligence tool and other information held under Brighton & Hove Connected [Local Intelligence](#). Further data and any relevant analysis will be provided on request to the commission.
- 3.32 On the basis of initial evidence and analysis, representatives, professionals and experts will be invited by the commission to give further evidence and insight.
- 3.33 As well as invitations, the work of the commission will be promoted with open and inclusive opportunities for other stakeholders and the public to engage. There will be a general call for evidence in all forms, including personal stories and experiences.

Themes

- 3.34 Understanding fairness and creating a fairer city depends on understanding, in a very broad sense, the connections between people and place – the interdependencies between national and local economy, neighbourhoods and communities, citizens and state, and personal circumstances.
- 3.35 To make this process manageable within the set timeframe, based on practice from elsewhere, the commission will need to sub-categorise its work and focus on particular areas for enquiry. Potential areas will include:
- Employment and skills
 - Financial inclusion
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Health and wellbeing
- 3.36 Within these themes, it is anticipated that the commission will consider differences in inequality associated with:
- Income and welfare (including in work and out of work poverty)
 - Families, lone parents and individuals

- Communities of identity, including age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or religion or belief.
- Communities of place

3.37 It is also important that stakeholders, members of public and communities are able to suggest specific issues of local concern to the commission (see Community engagement below)

Membership

3.38 Although there is no single agreed model for fairness commissions, the majority of commissions have significant commonalities in terms of membership, terms of reference, evidence-gathering and in the type of recommendation they make.

3.39 Based on learning from elsewhere the Chair of a fairness commission is often an independent person selected on the basis of their knowledge around fairness and equality and their ability to provide strong leadership in setting the strategic direction.

3.40 A commission will comprise representatives from the private, public and voluntary sector and aim to ensure appropriate and relevant expertise around equality and fairness are included. The Chair would also help finalise the appropriate membership.

3.41 Membership of the commission will comprise of up to 12 members including a Chair. This is based on what is seen elsewhere to provide an appropriate breadth of expertise but not create a commission that is too large for focussed discussion.

3.42 While membership is limited there will be a range of opportunities for other professionals and community representatives to input into the commission, as described in this report.

3.43 A Deputy Chair will be selected to chair meetings should the Chair be unavailable for any reason. The Chair of the council's Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee will sit on the commission as an observer, as will an observer from each opposition political group.

3.44 Members are not intended to be allocated on a purely sectoral basis but rather to bring together a range of informed and insightful individuals able to conduct the work. Representative views of all stakeholders, partners and communities will be solicited by the commission.

3.45 Membership will cover (not exclusively) the following areas of expertise:

- Child poverty
- The community & voluntary sector
- Community safety and cohesion
- Early years provision
- Employment and skills
- Financial inclusion
- Health inequality

- Housing affordability and homelessness
- Travel and transport

The role of members

3.46 The summary of the role of members will be to:

- Agree and shape the further aims and work programme of the commission
- Create an inclusive approach to community engagement, information and research, and communications
- Attend and participate in public events and activities, including via social media, to hear the views of citizens and other stakeholders
- Review the analysis of the evidence presented and engagement responses
- Produce a final written report which agrees and communicates findings
- Champion and represent the work of the commission during and after its completion

Community engagement

3.47 By engaging residents and city stakeholders to understand local needs more fully along with the necessary changes in public service provision, we can explore how the relationship, expectations and extent of collaboration between public services, citizens, businesses and visitors as a whole can change.

3.48 In the spirit of fairness the commission will be open and inclusive – anyone should have the opportunity to share their views with the commission. The commission will develop an engagement plan which is both inclusive and accessible, with further details given in paragraph 5.

3.49 Recognising the complexities around equality and fairness issues and how they cut right across public services and communities, the commission will engage with our city partners, including the Police, health services, universities and the community and voluntary sector (CVS).

3.50 The council's Corporate Plan places Active Citizenship as one of the key principles that we work toward. It describes a city people take pride in, where citizens communities and businesses are active in addressing things that matter to them.

3.51 In the current climate of reducing public spending and rising demand, public services will rely on working together with citizens to review and deliver services.

3.52 Therefore not only will the commission engage and involve communities in its work, but more profoundly its findings and recommendations will help to design what this new provision will look like, where citizens themselves play a greater role in contributing to and ensuring a fairer and more inclusive city.

Communication plan

3.53 A communication plan will be developed to promote the commission at all stages in its development and invite participation in its work.

- 3.54 Awareness of the commission and opportunities to engage will be raised and provided through a range of methods and media usage.

Outputs, delivery and timing

- 3.55 The fairness commission is expected to meet a limited number of times to produce a final report within a year, including SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced, timely) recommendations for the council and its key local partners.
- 3.56 Summaries of findings from specific activity, for example engagement activity, may be released at any time during the commission to further promote, engage people with and inform its work.
- 3.57 The intention is that the fairness commission will conclude and report by May 2016.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Fairness commissions undertaken or in progress across the UK have been reviewed to develop the previous report to Policy & Resources Committee and the subsequent proposals and terms of reference in this report.
- 4.2 Within the typical work of a fairness commission there are a number of potential themes to examine in detail within the local context, as described. It is left for the fairness commission to determine these more fully within the terms of reference.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The fairness commission will develop an engagement plan which is inclusive and accessible. To include:
- Community based discussions – bringing communities together to discuss experiences of fairness and inequality to feed into the commission
 - Social media engagement – widening the net to capture other views than those who choose to or are able to come to events
 - Web site and online feedback – a web presence explaining and updating on the work of the commission and opportunities to be involved
 - Using the established network of community groups and organisations, which could include Ward Councillors, to widen discussion and capacity beyond the commission and feed into its findings
- 5.2 Officers of the council, Members and partners will be asked to promote opportunities to get involved in engagement activity, and materials will be provided to solicit views directly and feed these back to the commission.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Policy & Resources Committee has agreed to the formation of the Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission at its meeting on 11th June

- 6.2 This report provides further detail for the Committee to consider before passing the further scoping and detail around the Fairness Commission to the Chair, and commission members once announced.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The set-up and running costs of the Fairness Commission are expected to be met from within existing budget resources. It is anticipated that the Chair and Members would receive subsistence and travel allowances.
- 7.2 The financial implications arising from the Commission's recommendations will help to inform future budget development and the medium term financial strategy.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington

Date: 01/07/2015

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The proposals in the report are consistent with the Council's powers and duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and the general powers of competence in the Localism Act 2011.
- 7.4 Under the Council's Constitution, the power to set up a commission is delegated to the Policy & Resources Committee. Policy & Resources Committee agreed in principle on 11 June 2015 to set up a Fairness Commission and it noted that the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee would consider the draft terms of reference for the Commission. Policy & Resources Committee also agreed to delegate the power to the Chief Executive, having regard to the recommendations of this Committee, to establish the Fairness Commission and take all steps necessary or incidental to the establishment of the Commission.

Lawyer Consulted:

Sarita Arthur-Crow

Date: 19/06/2015

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 The fairness commission will consider issues relating to equalities, particularly being about inequality experienced by people and communities within the city.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.6 The fairness commission may consider issues broadly relating to sustainability, particularly being about the quality of life (social, financial and environmental) within the city as a whole and for specific communities and neighbourhoods.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.7 The fairness commission may consider issues relating to crime and disorder, particularly being about by cohesion and tensions experience by people and communities within the city in relation to either realities or perceptions of fairness.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.8 This report has considered practice from elsewhere in running fairness commissions including risks and opportunities.
- 7.9 The fairness commission itself will consider the risks associated with not addressing issues relating to inequality and poverty and opportunities for the city, communities and council and public services more widely in creating a fairer city.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 The fairness commission will consider issues relating to health inequality, being either a cause and/or outcomes of fairness, as experience by people and communities.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 The fairness commission itself will consider the risks associated with not addressing issues relating to inequality and poverty and opportunities for the city, communities and council and public services more widely in creating a fairer city.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.12 Other issues may be identified by the fairness commission during the detailed scoping or undertaking of its work.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Minute Extract- Policy & Resources Committee 11 June 2015
2. Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission Terms of Reference

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission, Policy & Resources Committee, 11 June 2015 (report of the Assistant Chief Executive)

