

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 67

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Equalities Update		
Date of Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Commission		
Report of:	David Murray, Strategic Director Communities		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Communities and Equality Team has overview of equality and inclusion work across the council.
- 1.2 Overview & Scrutiny Commission requested regular updates on equalities work, including six-monthly updates on the Single Equality Scheme. This report covers the period June 2011-January 2012.
- 1.3 This report is due to go to Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 31 January.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Equality and Inclusion Policy

- 3.1.1 Currently there are two documents that describe our objectives and actions with regard to equality; these are 'The Single Equality Scheme' and 'Working Towards an Inclusive City'. Both documents are due for review and we intend to replace these with one new 'Equality and Inclusion Policy'.
- 3.1.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires us to set out corporate objectives and describe the ways in which these will be met. We are therefore consulting on a range of draft objectives which together will underpin and reflect the priorities of the new Corporate Plan.
- 3.1.3 The Equality Act sets out General and Specific Equality Duties for public authorities. These and how we meet them will be incorporated into the new Equality and Inclusion Policy. Our existing processes already enable us to demonstrate compliance with most aspects of the legislation and work is underway to ensure we meet the new specific duties.

The General Duties require public bodies to have *due regard* to the need to meet 3 aims:

- **To eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **To advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **To foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Specific Duties are that public bodies must:

- Develop a minimum of one equality objective to work towards every 4 years
- Provide evidence that we are meeting the general duty to promote equality; eliminate discrimination; and foster good relations between groups
- Provide information relating to employees (for organisations with 150 or more staff) and others affected by policies and practice (service users)

3.1.4 Following consultation the Policy will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in March 2012. It will cover the period March 2012 – March 2014.

3.1.5 Supporting the Policy a new implementation plan will be created to detail planned actions. In order to ensure maximum engagement and accountability, review events will be planned with the aim of involving key stakeholders in assessing the impact and effectiveness of the Policy and associated actions.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget

3.2.1 Assessing the potential positive and negative impact of decisions on different equality groups is a key part of meeting the council's duty under the Equality Act, and demonstrating that we are doing so. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) enable us to use the findings to inform decision-making, increasing opportunities for positive benefits and reducing or removing negative impacts, specifically where they affect one or more group disproportionately, and especially where they may be unlawful.

3.2.2 A Budget EIA consultation process is underway to identify the main potential impacts on groups covered by legislation. Following this, at the point at which decisions are made about budgets, full EIAs will be carried out which will analyse specific impacts and develop the required actions.

3.2.3 Cumulative impacts across services on specific groups will also be considered, to identify where a series of individual changes – each in themselves having no disproportionate impact – may accumulate into a significant impact for an equalities group. This whole council approach will be used to inform discussion and decision-making about the budget.

3.3 City Inclusion Partnership

- 3.3.1 The City Inclusion Partnership (CIP) is a group under the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership (B&HSP), supported by the council's Communities and Equality team. It exists to lead, develop and support equalities approaches in strategic planning and implementation across the city, in order to improve local service delivery, support partnership working and reduce inequalities in Brighton and Hove.
- 3.3.2 Partners are primarily from the statutory sector (NHS Trusts, emergency services, council, probation etc) with representation from the Stronger Communities Partnership and Equality Network (elected representatives of the community and voluntary sector with an equalities remit).
- 3.3.3 There have been significant changes locally and nationally which are having an impact on the way in which the CIP works and its function: the review of the B&HSP is likely to result in changes to the role of the CIP and its relationship with the other partnerships; the new Equality Act 2010 and associated new duties; and changes among partners organisations. Much of the focus of this year has been on working out how this will affect CIP's work plan and what priorities should be set for the future.

3.4 Needs Assessment

3.4.1 Black and Minority Ethnic Needs Assessment

In 2010 the Communities and Equality Team undertook a strategic review of engagement: 'The Strengthening Communities Review'. This examined the council's engagement activities through consultation with local communities. There were a number of findings and recommendations from this review, one of which included a stronger focus and resources for engagement with communities of interest and identity – specifically Black and Minority Ethnic, (BME), and Lesbian, Gay, Bixsexual and Transgender communities, (LGBT). Specific commissions have therefore taken place which are described later in this paper.

As part of this BME community groups have stated that they feel a strategic needs assessment would help to 'mainstream' BME voice and needs at all levels of decision making in the city. Whilst data and information on BME communities exists in various forms and places in the city – it lacks coherence and validity and several gaps exist in relation to specific ethnicities and issues. The idea, need and scope for such a piece of work is currently being explored by the Communities and Equality Team in partnership with BME community and voluntary groups, NHS Sussex and the council's Partnership Community Safety, Housing and Research and Consultation Teams.

3.4.2 Countability

The Countability research project was established to address a data gap regarding the barriers faced by disabled people in key aspects of their lives. Locally relevant data on disabled people is currently extremely limited, restricted to general data on service access figures (e.g. numbers of benefits claimants) or the prevalence of specific impairments or health conditions. The gap that this highlights however is the lived experience of disabled people in the city, a better understanding of which would enable service providers to tackle barriers and reduce inequality through commissioning activity.

The council has contributed funding to this research project, which is currently analysing data provided by participants in interviews and focus groups. The Fed, Centre for Independent Living is the lead organisation and the University of Brighton is providing academic support.

3.5 Engagement

3.5.1 Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Health Inclusion Project (LGBT HIP).

As described above, the Strengthening Communities Review recommended that resources be focussed on engaging the city's LGBT communities following the closure of Spectrum.

In order to maximise resources and impact the council's Communities and Equality team have worked with NHS Sussex to build on their existing funding arrangements with a new consortium of LGBT organisations known as 'LGBT HIP'. Hosted by Terrence Higgins Trust, LGBT HIP was set up to engage LGBT communities in health priorities and has now been expanded to include broader public priorities, including those of the council. The project enables the council to have two way conversations with LGBT communities – for example, about neighbourhood councils and the new Equality and Inclusion Policy.

3.5.2 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Engagement

A similar process has been developed in relation to the engagement of BME communities. The team has worked with NHS Sussex colleagues to explore a programme of investment in the city's local BME infrastructure organisation – the Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership. Joint outcomes are being agreed to enable an 18 month programme of funded support that will include support to the BME needs assessment described above.

3.5.3 Holocaust Memorial Day

The council, once again, showed commitment to opposing racism, anti-Semitism, ageism, homophobia and all forms of discrimination and deliberate social isolation by continuing to support Holocaust Memorial Day (January).

Events for 2012 include the Wiener Library Travelling Exhibition "Never Again? Thinking about the Holocaust", a presentation of a memoir telling the story of a young man born in the Krakow Ghetto who survived five concentration camps, an LGBT exhibition "The Third Sex in the Third Reich" by Brighton Ourstory, and various memorial events for young people taking place with the Homework Club at Jubilee Library.

3.5.4 Brighton and Hove People's Day

People's Day is a community event designed to increase understanding and to celebrate the diverse communities that make up the city. The idea for the day came from the Brighton and Hove Muslim Forum and has evolved from separate events that previously took place known as Older Peoples Day and Black and Minority Ethnic Elders Day.

A successful event was held in 2011 and the feedback from this will be used to ensure a bigger and improved event with wider community involvement for 2012 (to coincide with the Olympic Torch relay weekend of festivities in July).

3.5.5 'Reducing Inequality through Engagement' Showcase Event

As part of the Stronger Communities Partnership this showcase event is being organised for 27 February 2012. The celebratory event for community and voluntary sector groups, key decision-makers and commissioners will highlight how the Community Engagement Framework has been used successfully by community groups and statutory partners to engage with residents across the city.

The event will feature a series of short presentations by local neighbourhood and communities of interest and identity groups showcasing examples of best practice engagement followed by questions. There will also be interactive market stalls to share learning and provide network opportunities.

3.6 Community Development Commissioning

Currently the team commissions community development support to 26 neighbourhoods in the city through a local third sector provider, the Trust for Developing Communities (and its partners). Neighbourhood based community development has been a cornerstone of the council's engagement approach for many years through programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal.

As part of the Strengthening Communities Review this work was independently evaluated and subject to a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. This found that for £1 the council invested in community development, it received £11 in social return. However, the review also recommended that the work place stronger emphasis on working with communities of interest and identity living in targeted areas. As a result, the new commission and associated needs assessment (currently underway) goes much further in identifying and prioritising equality groups whilst retaining a focus on supporting people to help themselves to tackle local issues and needs.

3.7 Corporate activities

3.7.1 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

Stonewall's Top 100 Employers is the definitive list of Britain's gay-friendly employers, compiled from submissions to the annual Workplace Equality Index. It assesses employers' performance in areas from tackling anti-gay bullying and harassment to supporting the career development of LGB employees and the presence of senior role models for them. The council was pleased to be recognised as the top local authority in the 2012 assessment, ranked 15th in the Top 100.

3.7.2 Worker Forums

A Diversity Champion for each of the Forums has been identified from the Cabinet.

Each Forum is developing a Business Plan which will be taken to the Strategic Leadership Board in the coming months.

The LGBT Workers' Forum is particularly expecting to focus its work on Trans issues in the coming year.

3.7.3 Equality Conference

Details are still to be confirmed for this event. Further information can be provided.

3.8 Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

3.8.1 We are supporting the review of the council's Traveller Strategy, ensuring that the consultation process and content recognises and reflects the needs of diverse groups. The intention is to ensure that the new strategy balances the needs of the Traveller communities visiting Brighton & Hove with the needs of the city's settled communities.

3.8.2 As another strand of our support for this process the team has arranged and run awareness training for Community Development Workers who are often the first point of contact for residents with concerns or questions, and also for council staff with relevant roles. We have also facilitated the running of Gypsy and Traveller training for elected members, with joint input from a community group representing Gypsies and Travellers and council officers.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 The Strengthening Communities Review undertaken in 2010, involved consultation with other 200 community and voluntary organisations in the city, as well as council teams, NHS Sussex and Sussex Police.

4.2 The engagement on the Equality and Inclusion Policy will define priorities and direction for the next three years.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The initiatives discussed in the report are funded through identified budgets within the Council and Partner organisations.

The equality impact of the 2012/13 budget proposals is fully considered as part of the decision making process - further analysis of equality data and an analysis of the corporate cumulative impact will be available to Cabinet on 9 February 2012 as described in paragraph 3.2.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Anne Silley Date: 18/01/12

Legal Implications:

5.2 The law as stated at paragraph 3.1.3 above is correct. The general public sector equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act; and the specific duties enabling a public authority to perform the general duty better are set out in regulations made under section 153.

The council must publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general duty by 31 January 2012 and subsequently at no less than 12 monthly intervals following the date of last publication.

The equality objective(s) which the council must prepare must be published no later than 6 April 2012.

Equalities Implications:

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

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.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

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

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Reducing inequality is the primary intention of the work described in this report, recognising that this has an impact on health and well-being.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The actions contained within the report have been developed with input from all council Directorates and directly meet the administration priority to tackle inequality.

6. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 This report is the regular update as requested by Scrutiny

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

