

Subject:	Brighton & Hove City Council Equality & Inclusion Policy 2012-2015		
Date of Meeting:	15 March Cabinet 22 March Council		
Report of:	Strategic Director for Communities		
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities and Public Protection		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Nicky Cambridge	Tel: 29-6827
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No:	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This report presents the new Equality & Inclusion Policy (2012-15) for the city council (appendix 1). The policy replaces the council's Single Equality Scheme and 'Working towards an Inclusive City' policy, as well as building on the council's excellence award from the 2011 Equality Framework for Local Government Diversity Peer Challenge.
- 1.2 The new approach takes key priorities and city issues from the Corporate Plan and addresses them within our new Equality Objectives. This means it is addressing the equalities implications of the Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 It describes the council's vision and measurable objectives to promote, facilitate, deliver and report progress on equality within the council and in the city. It is supported by key actions (see Section 2 of the Policy) that teams across the council are and will be taking to deliver the objectives, and uses existing measures to enable progress reporting.
- 1.4 The policy also ensures that the council will meet its legal obligation under the 2010 Equality Act to set a minimum of one equality objective for the local authority. Equality and Inclusion is a high priority for the city council. The new policy builds on good work and processes already underway and presents corporate equality and inclusion objectives across five areas for the council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the draft Equality and Inclusion Policy (2012-15) as set out in appendix 1.

- 2.2 That Cabinet recommend the draft Equality and inclusion Policy (2012-15) for approval by Full Council.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note the corporate actions to deliver on the objectives as set out in Section 2 of the Policy, and that a full, measurable action plan will be developed through consultation to support the agreed objectives, for submission to the appropriate Committee after consultation.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 As a result of the timings of the following:
- The public sector specific duties in the Equality Act 2010 came into force in September 2011.
 - The Council's Single Equality Scheme and 'Working Towards an Inclusive City' policy were due to be updated in December 2011
 - The council's new Corporate Plan (2011-2015) was approved by Full Council;

It became self-evident and prudent to produce one single document containing the council's corporate objectives on equality and inclusion. This would build on the priorities of the Corporate Plan¹, meet our legal duty and make it easier for individuals to access the council's position on equality and inclusion.

- 3.2 To help demonstrate continuity with previous policies appendix 3 outlines achievements on the Single Equality Scheme (2010-12)

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Appendix 2 provides a detailed feedback report on the consultation. It outlines how the consultation was carried out and provides information about the key themes that emerged.
- 4.2 As part of the council's commitment to measuring the impact and effectiveness of the Policy a new review process is being developed by the Communities & Equality Team. The process will include ongoing opportunities for consultation and feedback as well as a formal stakeholder review which will include community and voluntary groups, elected members and partners. Progress updates will also be formally reported to the appropriate council committee.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The activities in the action plan that accompanies the policy are expected to be delivered within existing resources and reflected by services in budget planning.

¹ BHCC Corporate Plan 2011-2015 priorities: tackling inequality, creating a more sustainable city, engaging people who live and work in the city, being a responsible and empowering employer and creating a council the city deserves.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The role of formulating or preparing the council's Equality & Inclusion Policy falls to the executive. Under the council's Policy Framework, the adoption or approval of the Policy is reserved to Full Council.

The legal obligation referred to in paragraph 1.4 above stems from regulation 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. This requires the council to prepare and publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve to meet its public sector equality duty as specified in section 149 (1) of the 2010 Act.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 23/02/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The purpose of the policy is to set the council's vision and objectives for promoting, delivering, measuring and reporting progress on equality in the council and the city. Equality groups throughout the city were involved in developing the policy and shall have opportunity to continue being involved in the ongoing improvement, implementation and review of the action plan and progress against it.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Communities in which different groups of individuals face inequality and exclusion and/or where relations between groups are not good are unsustainable socially and economically and present both an immediate and long term financial, legal and reputational risk to the local authority.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The policy has a direct relationship with helping to tackle and reduce hate crime and discrimination in the city. It supports the corporate plan outcome to build safe and cohesive communities.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The Equality Act 2010 provides the council with the opportunity to refresh its equality and inclusion priorities and make sure that they reflect those of the city's different communities. It provides a good opportunity to consolidate the council's work to date and ensure that resources are focused on appropriate and timely actions.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Individuals experiencing inequality and exclusion often suffer mental and/or physical ill health, and within distinct communities some individuals are more vulnerable to either more severe or more frequent ill health. Having a set of clear corporate equality and inclusion objectives that all teams in the council are working towards will help to prevent and reduce health inequalities.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Without clearer defined equality and inclusion objectives, based on data, information and consultation with equalities groups across the city and staff across the organisation it would be difficult to achieve the council's corporate priorities of; tackling inequality, creating a more sustainable city, engaging people who live and work in the city, being a responsible and empowering employer and creating a city the council deserves. The policy has sets the council's corporate position on equality and inclusion and therefore has implications for and is the responsibility of all teams across the council.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 There are no alternatives. As well as being a legal requirement the council has prioritised tackling inequality within its new Corporate Plan (2011-2015) agreed at Full council in October 2011.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The council is required by law to approve an equality policy setting at least one objective.
- 7.2 Full Council is required to approve the policy as stated in Part 3.1, paragraph 3.20 (ii) of the council's constitution.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Brighton & Hove City Council Equality & Inclusion Policy (2012-2015)
2. Consultation Feedback on the Draft Equalities & Inclusion Policy 2012-2015
3. BHCC Single Equality Scheme Summary Update on Actions

