

Report to: Governance Select Committee

Date of meeting: 5 July 2016



Portfolio: Governance and Development Management (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – Outturn report and compliance with the public sector equality duty.

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Select Committee reviews the outturn position in relation to the Equality Objectives 2012-2016 and other work to ensure the Council's compliance with its equality duties.

Executive Summary:

The Equality Act 2010 placed a number of responsibilities on the Council, including a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to equality in the exercise of its functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not. Further specific responsibilities were introduced requiring the adoption of equality objectives to improve equality for service users and employees, to carry out equality analysis, and to publish equality information.

In March 2012, the Cabinet agreed four equality objectives for the four years from 2012 to 2016, designed to help the Council meet the aims of the PSED. This report reflects progress against these objectives at the end of their lifetime, and other work to ensure compliance with its equality duties.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

In view of the corporate importance of the achievement of these objectives, and ensuring compliance with the PSED, progress is reported to the Select Committee on a six monthly basis.

Other Options for Action:

None. Failure to monitor and review progress against the Equality Objectives and to take corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for judgements made about the Council, and might mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

Report:

1. The Equality Act 2010 places a number of obligations on the Council designed to integrate consideration of the advancement of equality into its day to day business. It

places a responsibility on bodies subject to the duty to consider how they can work to tackle systematic discrimination and disadvantage affecting people with particular characteristics. The benefits sought include better informed decision making and policy development, a clearer understanding of the needs of service users, increased satisfaction and better quality services.

2. Progress against the Council's equality duties is reported to Management Board and the Governance Select Committee at 6 monthly intervals. This report provides a outturn position statement in relation to the Council's equality objectives for 2012-2016, and other work to deliver the Council's statutory equality duties.

Equality Objectives

3. As last reported to the Committee in November 2015 the actions to deliver the objectives for the four years up to March 2016 have been largely completed. Where some deliverables are outstanding these are where work is in progress but has not been completed by the deadline. The Corporate Equality Working Group (CEWG) will continue to monitor outstanding action deliverables.
4. Over the course of the lifetime of the action plan, developments elsewhere in the organisation, or operational requirements, or sometimes to build on progress already achieved, have led to changes to the deliverables of certain actions, or the approach to delivering the actions. Where this is the case, the progress reported reflects the work achieved nevertheless, together with an explanation of how the work will be addressed if still appropriate.
5. A schedule detailing progress against individual actions is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. In reporting progress against the objectives, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to individual actions as appropriate to reflect outturn position:

Achieved (Green) - specific actions have been completed or relevant targets achieved;

Behind Schedule (Red) - specific actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with relevant targets;

- 31 (94%) of the 33 actions have been achieved within the relevant targets, and
- 2 (6%) of the 33 actions have not been achieved although significant progress has been made.

6. The Committee will recall that the process to develop a set of objectives for the four years up until 2020 has been underway and coordinated by the CEWG. This second set of objectives has been designed to build upon the original set and seeks to embed a consideration of equality into a wider range of Council activities. Therefore it addresses equality in our partnership working; in our commissioning, procurement and contract management; in our business activities; and by building our capacity to deliver equality. These objectives were adopted by Cabinet in April 2016. CEWG has since met to identify priorities and delivery approaches for actions to achieve these objectives within timescales.

Equality Analysis

7. A three year programme of equality analysis commenced in April 2014. Analysis is the process by which we gain an understanding of the impact of our policies and activities on people. This understanding is a requirement of the legislation. In the course of 2016/17 the process will be reviewed and a new schedule produced for 2017/18.

Equality Information

8. Equality Information must be published annually, with the latest report being published in August 2015 and which was well received by elected members. A further report will be produced in July 2016.

Equality policy and scheme

8. Whilst it is not a requirement of the legislation to produce an equality policy or scheme, it is felt by the CEWG that it is a good way to set out our approach to meeting our statutory responsibilities, and therefore these documents will be reviewed and updated in the course of the current year.
9. The Committee is requested to review the outturn position in relation to the achievement of the equality objectives for 2012/16; and other work to meet the Council's statutory equality duties.

Resource Implications:

None for this report.

Legal and Governance Implications:

This work complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None for this report.

Consultation Undertaken:

Not applicable to this report.

Background Papers:

Equality Scheme and Equality Objectives 2012-16 / Equality Policy 2011

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

None for this report.

Equality

This report seeks to ensure the development and coordination of a corporate approach to the Council's statutory equality duties. Actions discussed in this report cover the full range of the Council's services, and its dual role of service provider and employer. Whilst no equality implications arise from this report, the appropriateness of actions to deliver the objectives, together with the successful achievement of the objectives, have the potential to impact on service users and employees across all the protected characteristics.