

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

Meeting date: 25 November 2019

From: Executive Director – Corporate Customer and Community Services

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Board with an update on progress in implementing the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group on Equality Objectives.

2.0 ISSUES FOR SCRUTINY

- 2.1 To note the report.
- 2.2 To make any recommendations for the new Equality Objectives and Equality Plan that will be taken to Cabinet in 2020.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since 2012 all public bodies have had a requirement under the Equality Act (2010) to set Equality Objectives. These are four yearly objectives that set out how the Council will meet its Public Sector Equality Duty which is to:
- **eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation** and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - **foster good relations between** persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2 In 2016 Cabinet set Equality Objectives for 2016-20, however the Board questioned whether these objectives were supported by action that could be evaluated.
- 3.3 This resulted in a one day Task and Finish Group. On 2 February 2018 the following recommendations were reported to and agreed by Cabinet:
- **Recommendation 1:** To introduce a council-wide Equality Action Plan setting out how the objectives agreed in 2016 will be met.

- **Recommendation 2:** To use the annual Equality Needs Assessment to provide an update on how the organisation has been delivering against its objectives.
 - **Recommendation 3:** To develop for Local Committees a suite of information on equalities for their local committee area that can inform Area Planning and integration work in localities.
- 3.4 **Recommendation 1:** A completed Equality Action Plan was developed over the summer and agreed by Cabinet in October 2018 (see appendix 1).
- 3.5 **Recommendation 2:** The Equality Needs Analysis is a data set providing information on services and employment relating to people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality.
- 3.6 Work is underway in completing the 2020 Equality Needs Analysis which will report on the delivery of the Equality from October 2017 to end December 2018 (end of 3rd reporting quarter 2019-20). This will be used to inform the 2020-24 Equality Objectives and a revised Equality Plan, and will be published alongside these in a report to Cabinet in June 2020.
- 3.7 **Recommendation 3:** A suite of local Equality profiles has been produced for local committees and is available on the Equality and Diversity page of the Council's website (Appendix 3 provides an example from Carlisle).

4.0 **PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE EQUALITY PLAN**

- 4.1 The Equality Plan has three areas of focus: customers, communities and workforce. Appendix 2 provides a RAG (Red-Amber-Green) rated overview of progress in delivery.
- 4.2 Overall the plan is on track. 18 out of 22 areas are reporting as Green and four as Amber.
- 4.3 A suite of performance indicators will be reported on in the Equality Needs Analysis this will be able to give a full year's performance data for the year 2019-20 and give measures on direction of progress. Key measures will include:
- 2019 Educational attainment data by SEND, gender and ethnicity;
 - 2019 Adult and Community Education outcomes data by learning disability, gender and ethnicity;
 - Children's social care diversity gap analysis;
 - Diversity profile of participants in Active Cumbria programmes;
 - Changes to staff diversity profile;
 - Gender Pay Gap trends and pay gap analysis by disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation;
 - Apprenticeship diversity profiles.
- 4.4 The main risks facing the Council and actions to address them are outlined below:

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient Equality Analysis or EIA of Council decisions	Policy Team screening Strategic Planning proposals and Cabinet Forward Planner and working with Directorates to address Equality
Lack of quantitative data on some protected characteristics to carry out robust Equality Analysis (especially LGBT+ and ethnicity).	Working on a suite of case studies that will inform EIAs and Equality Analysis of decisions, providing qualitative information.
<p>Council challenged on grounds of discrimination due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment; • Lack of reasonable adjustments; • Decisions affecting staff. 	New e-learning on Equality to be rolled out across the whole organisation. Regular reviews with HR and Legal of any Employment Tribunals relating to discrimination and lessons learnt.

5.0 OUTCOMES FROM DELIVERING THE EQUALITY PLAN

- 5.1 **Customers:** The new customer training that is being rolled out across the organisation addresses Equalities. The training package includes exercises around prejudice in how customers are treated, and trainees are given ideas about how they can support customers who may have additional requirements relating to culture, religion, disability or gender.
- 5.2 Equalities is also being considered as part of any service changes that could impact on customers. As a result of the Equality Impact Assessment of the proposal to close a care home in Staveley, a new checklist is being produced for when a vulnerable adult is moved from one location to another. This includes considerations around dementia, disability, medical conditions (i.e. diabetes), but also religion, culture, language and sexual orientation. This would enable the diversity needs of every person being moved to be taken into account.
- 5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment of the new homeless contracts for young people has highlighted the importance of strengthening the offer relating to ethnicity, sexual orientation, transgender and disability.
- 5.4 Equality is also being considered in relation to other services including Ways to Welfare and future housing provision for vulnerable adults. This is resulting in better targeting of resource taking into account the profile of people accessing support – especially relating to gender and household composition.
- 5.5 **Communities:** In 2018 the Council received two year funding from the Government’s Controlling Migration Fund. This has been utilised to develop a new pilot project focusing on community integration: the Cumbria

Community Integration programme. The programme focuses on areas where there has been the highest overseas migration – Windermere and the central Lakes and central Carlisle. There are two strands to the programme, building stronger community links between migrants and the settled community, and working with migrant families to reduce demand on schools and children's services. Delivery of the project is in partnership with AWAZ Cumbria, Cumbria CVS and Cumbria Centre for Development and Education (CDEC).

- 5.6 The project has been running in Carlisle for a year through four community centres in the south of the city. Migrant communities are now hosting joint projects with the wider local community including – an international cinema night, a cooking club, a citizens' journalism project and an international women's group. The project has also established a group for parents to meet weekly at Brook Street School which is Cumbria's second most diverse school in terms of pupil profile.
- 5.7 The CVS have recruited and trained a bank of English language tutors who can meet one to one socially with migrants who struggle to attend ESOL or progress in ESOL classes. This is creating support networks and friendships between some of the most isolated migrants and Cumbrian residents who are volunteering. The long term aim is to embed this model alongside the Adult and Community Education offer, and with the new 0-19 services.
- 5.8 The case study appended to this report demonstrates the impact: a woman working on a zero hours contract and isolated from her work-colleagues because she could not speak their languages was referred to the project via an ESOL tutor. Thanks to the support from a volunteer English language tutor she could obtain her National Insurance number, move to a job in a dementia home and is now on course to train as a teacher.
- 5.9 Cumbria Pride: The Council sponsored Cumbria Pride. Cumbria Fire and Rescue, the Registrars and the Fostering Team had stalls. As a result people attending Pride are considering getting married using the Council service, and several enquiries into fostering have been made (see case study appended). The Council has also seen a rise in the number of same-sex couples adopting over the past three years. The Council also supported the event by flying the rainbow flag and a proactive media and social media campaign.
- 5.10 Black History Month: AWAZ have teamed up with the library service to give a series of displays and talks on 'Hidden Heritage: The Contribution of Black and Minority People to the cultural heritage of Cumbria.' The highlight was the unveiling of a blue plaque in Maryport for the Britain's first Black policeman. The event was attended by 50 people, including Cumbria's Lieutenant Sherriff who unveiled the plaque.
- 5.11 Autism champions group: this group was set up by Members in response to the Autism Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. There are currently five Local Committee Autism Champions, who are supported by the Community Development Teams. Projects they have undertaken include changes to the Library offer; work with town centres and shopping centres, to create safe spaces; training and awareness raising including with Sellafield.

- 5.12 Local Area Equality profiles: In summer 2019, the Council's Information and Intelligence Team produced six Local Area Equality Profiles. These provide information including Census data on diversity, but also data from the English National Concession Scheme, School Pupil profiles, Hate Crime statistics and Community and Adult Education diversity data. This gives local Members and officers completing EIAs better information in one place than had been previously the case.
- 5.13 **Workforce:** Gender Pay reporting is showing consistent progress in targeting inequalities between men and women. Representation of women in senior positions demonstrates that the Council does not have a glass ceiling. Fire and Rescue have renewed their Positive Action programme to recruit more female fire fighters, and the Apprenticeship route has been used to increase representation of women in Highways.
- 5.14 The Council is in the process of establishing diversity staff networks. Over summer there was a recruitment campaign, and the first meetings were held with people interested in joining networks in September. There is further work to establish the networks, and the next step will be to engage with them around how the Council reviews its approach to Equality and to review the new Equality e-learning package. An early outcome of the groups is that a staff member who attended has been able to work alongside People Management to change the way the Council's employment recording system captures data on sex, gender and gender identity.
- 5.15 In relation to Autism, the Member Autism champions group has been working with People Management and staff with Autism to develop new Neurodiversity Guidance for managers when working with staff with Autism, Dyslexia and other neurological conditions, which has been supported by a new e-learning package. This piece of work acts as a model of co-production between Members, staff who have a protected characteristic and the officers to change policy and practice.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Thanks to scrutiny's recommendation that the Council produces an action plan to support delivery of the Equality Objectives, the Council is now in a strong place to report on the impact of those objectives when setting new ones in 2020. As the foregoing report demonstrates, there are multiple examples of how the Council's approach is benefitting customers, communities and the workforce.

Simon Higgins – Assistant Director Customer and Community Services
25/11/19

Appendices

1. Equality Plan
2. Equality Plan progress overview
3. Carlisle Local Equality Profile.
4. English Language Volunteer case study.
5. Cumbria Pride case study.
6. Black History Month case study.
7. Cumbria County Council Neurodiversity Guidance for Managers.

Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions

[including Local Committees]

Cabinet agreement of Equality Objectives Task and Finish Group (2 February 2018).

Background Papers

Equality Objectives Task and Finish Group report.

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