



Single Corporate Equality Scheme (SCES) Annual Progress Report Year 1 July 2009- June 2010

Summary

About the Scheme

The Single Corporate Equality Scheme (SCES) describes actions that the council will take to deliver the objectives of its Fairness and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12. A copy of the strategy and scheme can be found on <http://www.york.gov.uk/community/equality/>

Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and community groups, the scheme was approved by the Executive in 2009.

The scheme has 6 themes of action, also called "objectives":

- Know the community
- Leadership, partnership and commitment
- Engaging with people from the equality strands
- Providing responsive services
- Having a modern diverse workforce
- Acting in each Directorate

Summary of progress

Significant progress was made during this first year.

Progress included:

- √ We identified equality data held by different council services

- √ We analysed and used equality data to plan and make important decisions (for example about the annual budget and a community cohesion plan for the city)
- √ We set up and supported the Staff Equality Reference Group
- √ We reviewed the way the Social Inclusion Working Group works and supported community groups to give council advice and to promote understanding about equality issues in council services
- √ We reviewed and started to improve access to services and employment, for people from equality groups
- √ We put in place an inclusive Workforce Strategy
- √ Working with partners, we promoted participation in civic and public life to equality community groups
- √ Working with the equality community, we assessed the impact of key council policies and practices
- √ We continued the programme of equality and human rights training for key staff and councillors, that we started in 2008.

Progress in detail

Theme 1 - Know the community

Action 1

Agree which National Performance Indicators (NPIs) and local Performance Indicators (PIs) will be collected and analysed by each directorate in the six equality strands. This will enable progress to be measured by directorate.

Put in place an agreed protocol and action plan for the collection, analysis and use of reliable equality data across the council.

Progress

NPIs and data collection

We started a survey of equality data and information available in various council services. The survey showed that we had some good information and data in hand. The next step was to use the findings of the survey to help each directorate select sets of National Performance Indicators (NPIs) to measure progress with equality in their service areas. However, in late 2009 the government withdrew a group of key equality

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performance indicators for technical reasons. New indicators were not developed before the general election. We shall continue this work as soon the new government announces what it proposes to do with a set of NPIs for measuring equalities.

In addition, we worked with the Social Inclusion Working Group to arrive at a suitable equalities data collection form (also called equalities profiling form) for our customers and staff.

Equalities data protocol

The Single Equality Act (SEA) 2010 was approved by Parliament in March 2010 and will be implemented starting October 2010. The Act changes current requirements about equality profiling, making them more extensive. As a result, the protocol has been delayed, pending guidance from the government about the new requirements. The guidance is expected in late summer 2010.

Using data in 2009-10

Meanwhile, council services have been using the data collection form that was issued by government for the Place Survey 2008. As a result, we collected evidence that guided councillor decisions about key issues, including priorities for the council budget in 2010-11.

We also analysed the results of the Place Survey 2008 and our staff satisfaction survey in the six equality strands. We have used the findings to put in place a community cohesion plan for the city (expected to be approved by Without Walls in autumn 2010) and the council Workforce Plan 2010-12, respectively.

Action 2

Agree which NPIs will be collected and analysed across the six equality strands by Without Walls, York's Local Strategic Partnership. This will make it possible to measure progress towards achieving fairness and inclusion across the city. Put in place an agreed protocol and action plan for the collection, analysis and use of reliable equality data across the Local Strategic Partnership.

Progress

This area of work depended on work under Action 1 being completed. It will be given priority in 2010-11.

T2 - Leadership partnership and commitment

Action 1

Support the development of a Community Cohesion plan at Local Strategic Partnership level.

Progress

A draft plan was put in place. The plan is called "One City". It is expected to be finalised in the autumn 2010.

Action 2

Review the council website and intranet, news releases, publications and general communication, to facilitate easy access to services and employment.

Progress

Access to services

The council's website and intranet were reviewed. The internet site and now includes facilities to change the font size as well as to translate information in other languages. Further changes will be made as the website is being upgraded after consultation with relevant equality groups including the Social Inclusion Working Group and the Staff Equality Reference Group.

In addition, we started to review our approach to written information like leaflets, council reports and letters. The findings of the review will be used to complete the corporate communication and information Equality Impact Assessment expected by winter 2010.

Access to employment

Improvements have been made to council recruitment processes, including the introduction of e-recruitment that was equality impact assessed with support from the council staff equality reference group (SERG). Further work is taking place to promote access to council employment opportunities in the context of the Council Workforce Strategy 2010-12.

Action 3

As in Action 2 above, working with Without Walls partners.

Progress

Working with partners to improve access to services and employment is affected by the introduction of the Single Equality Act 2010 (SEA) as well as by the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Action in this area will be prioritised in 2010-11.

Action 4

Refresh the council's procurement strategy and third sector commissioning and grants processes (as in the COMPACT), to ensure that they are fair and inclusive processes, and that they promote fairness and inclusion in the city and beyond.

Progress

Regarding procurement, we include specific equality and diversity questions within our tender documents. In addition we are working with the local chamber of commerce to ensure that information regarding pending tenders is available to the third sector and small and medium size businesses (SMEs). A recent example is the provision of Adult Social Care (currently out to tender). We have widely distributed our requirement and specifically stated that we will welcome submissions from SMEs, either individually and as a consortium approach.

This area of work is substantially affected by the introduction of the Single Equality Act 2010 (SEA). Action in this area will be prioritised in 2010-11 as soon as government guidance about the new Act becomes available.

Action 5

Put in place an action plan to promote civic and public participation, targeting people from the six strands, starting with disabled people and black and minority ethnic people.

Progress

In 2009-10, action focused on supporting already planned initiatives that included the "Me a Councillor?" event, the launch of the Youth Council and work that the neighbourhood management unit started to promote participation in public life and volunteering amongst school children and young people.

Equality community groups and members of the public were invited to the "Me a Councillor?" event in Mansion House and were supported to consider opportunities to stand as councillors.

York Youth Council (made up of young people age 11-18), was launched in spring 2009 and started to campaign for key issues like space for young people to meet in the city. This work is a continuation of work which has been underway through the Yor-Ok involvement strategy.

A plan about further activity in this area will be finalised in 2010-11.

T3 - Engaging with people from the equality strands

Action 1

Review how the Social Inclusion Working Group operates to ensure that it reaches and engages with all strands, particularly with hard to reach groups within the strands.

Progress

The review started in February 2008 and was completed in March 2010. Interim arrangements have been put in place for the period April 2010 to May 2011, pending the council election in May 2011 and changes in national practice and legislation in this area. A further review will take place after May 2011, as soon as changes in equality and community empowerment policy legislation and practice at national and local level, become clearer.

Action 2

Support the ongoing development of the council's Staff Equality Reference Group (SERG).

Progress

SERG was supported to finalise its terms of reference and put in place its first work-programme. The group met frequently and worked with council human resources practitioners to complete a number of important equality impact assessments, including pay and grading arrangements, discipline, complaints and office-of-the-future. SERG also contributed to the development of the Workforce Strategy 2010-12.

T4 - Providing responsive services

Action 1

Equality Impact Assessments

Undertake a programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of current and new council policies, strategies and practices and use these to put in place Directorate Equality Schemes (DES). Ensure that the resulting remedial action is taken on board in directorate and service planning. Monitor that agreed actions have been carried out and whether the effect has been beneficial or not. EIAs will be completed and published on the council website by end of March each year.

Directorate equality schemes

Three-year directorate/service equality schemes will be published after July 2009 and reviewed each year thereafter.

Progress

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

The programme of EIAs was completed and published on the council website, as planned. The programme included the Council Budget and several More for York projects. A report about the programme of EIAs can be found on <http://www.york.gov.uk/community/equality/eias/>.

Directorate Schemes

A number of directorates were able to put in place outline equality schemes. However, during 2009-10 there were significant changes to legislation and the equality framework for local government on which the schemes are modelled. As a result, the schemes had to be reviewed before final publication took place. This is a priority area for action in 2010-11.

Action 2

Review current and new, commissioning and procurement contracts to include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably.

Progress

This area of work is significantly affected by the introduction of the Single Equality Act 2010 (SEA) from October 2010. As a result, action in this area will be prioritised in 2010-11 as soon as government guidance about the new Act becomes available.

Action 3

Develop an equalities accreditation scheme for bodies we procure and commission from.

Progress

We have started to develop an accreditation scheme modelled on similar schemes developed by other councils. However, this area of work is significantly affected by the introduction of the Single Equality Act 2010 (SEA) from October 2010. As a result, this draft scheme will be finalised as soon as government guidance about procurement requirements in the SEA becomes available.

Action 4

Review our customer strategy and complaints procedures to ensure that they take on board the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups, including homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers.

Progress

The review was progressed as part of the More for York programme and the new council headquarters project, incorporating the York Customer Centre. The relevant Equality Impact Assessments were completed with input from the Social Inclusion Working Group.

Action 5

Develop and deliver a rolling programme of training in equality and human rights issues for councillors and staff.

Progress

Equality awareness and equality impact assessment training was delivered as planned to key staff, including front line staff and managers in housing and adult social services. External solicitors who work with council services provided a pre-council briefing seminar for councillors and senior officers covering equality and human rights legislation.

Action 6

Undertake a rolling programme of service reviews (More for York programme) to examine, amongst other things, access to services and participation in public life by people from the six equality strands.

Progress

Year 1 of the programme was delivered as planned. Key equality impact assessments for year 1 were completed including customer services, debt collection policy and practice as well as waste recycling.

Action 7

Facilitate the development of a common approach to fairness and inclusion in access to services provided by all LSP partners.

Progress

Following consultation, action in this area will be included in the community cohesion plan (the "One City" plan) that will be finalised in the autumn 2010.

T5 - Having a modern diverse workforce

Action 1

Put in place a corporate workforce plan that takes on board fairness and inclusion, is based on a good understanding of the local labour market and considers the barriers faced by people from the equality strands, particularly disabled people and BME people.

Progress

The corporate Workforce Plan 2010-12 was put in place, incorporating clear diversity objectives about disabled and black and minority ethnic employees, both current and future. The plan will be considered by council Executive in Summer 2010 and will then be published.

Action 2

Review current human resources policies to ensure that they are compliant with the latest requirements of equality and employment legislation.

Progress

We put in place an extensive programme of Human Resources policy and practice equality impact assessments. The EIAs were finalised with input from the staff equality reference group (SERG). The programme included the workforce plan, e-recruitment, staff complaints, discipline, weekly to monthly pay, management of change, induction, attendance at work and new ways of working.

Action 3

Put in place a prioritised programme of EIAs of major and new employment policies and procedures.

Progress

The programme of EIAs was put in place and completed as in Action 2 above.

T6 - Acting in each directorate

Action 1

Directorates will update their current one year schemes. The updated schemes will include a plan of action with indicators to measure progress with narrowing inequality in accessing services and service outcomes. They will also outline the programme of directorate and service level EIAs to be done in the future, as well as a programme of equality and human rights training for staff. The schemes will be monitored regularly.

Progress

Most directorates started to put in place three-year equality schemes. Housing and Adult Social Services and Neighbourhoods had their scheme discussed and approved by their directorate management teams. However, changes in equality legislation the equality framework for local government and National Performance Indicators for equality, have resulted in delays in this area. This is a priority area for action in 2010-11.

Action 2

Every directorate will self-assess against the three levels of the equality framework for local government by March each year. Action plans will be put in place to make sure that the directorate is progressing through the three levels of the framework, aiming for the 'achieving' level by April 2011. Actions needed to do this will be subsumed in Directorate plans and equality schemes.

Progress

Most directorates started this work. This is a priority area for action in 2010-11.