

## **The Council's Journey to Excellence in Equalities**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides an update for the scrutiny committee on:
  - The Council's new governance arrangements for equalities
  - The Council's ambition to be 'Excellent' under the Equalities Framework for Local Government
  - The Council's progress towards 'Excellent' under the framework
2. The committee is asked to:
  - Comment on progress
  - Identify any further briefing that they require in order to be able to provide effective scrutiny in this area
  - Consider how it can help to strengthen the Council's performance in equalities, for example by ensuring that consideration of equalities is built into scrutiny activity

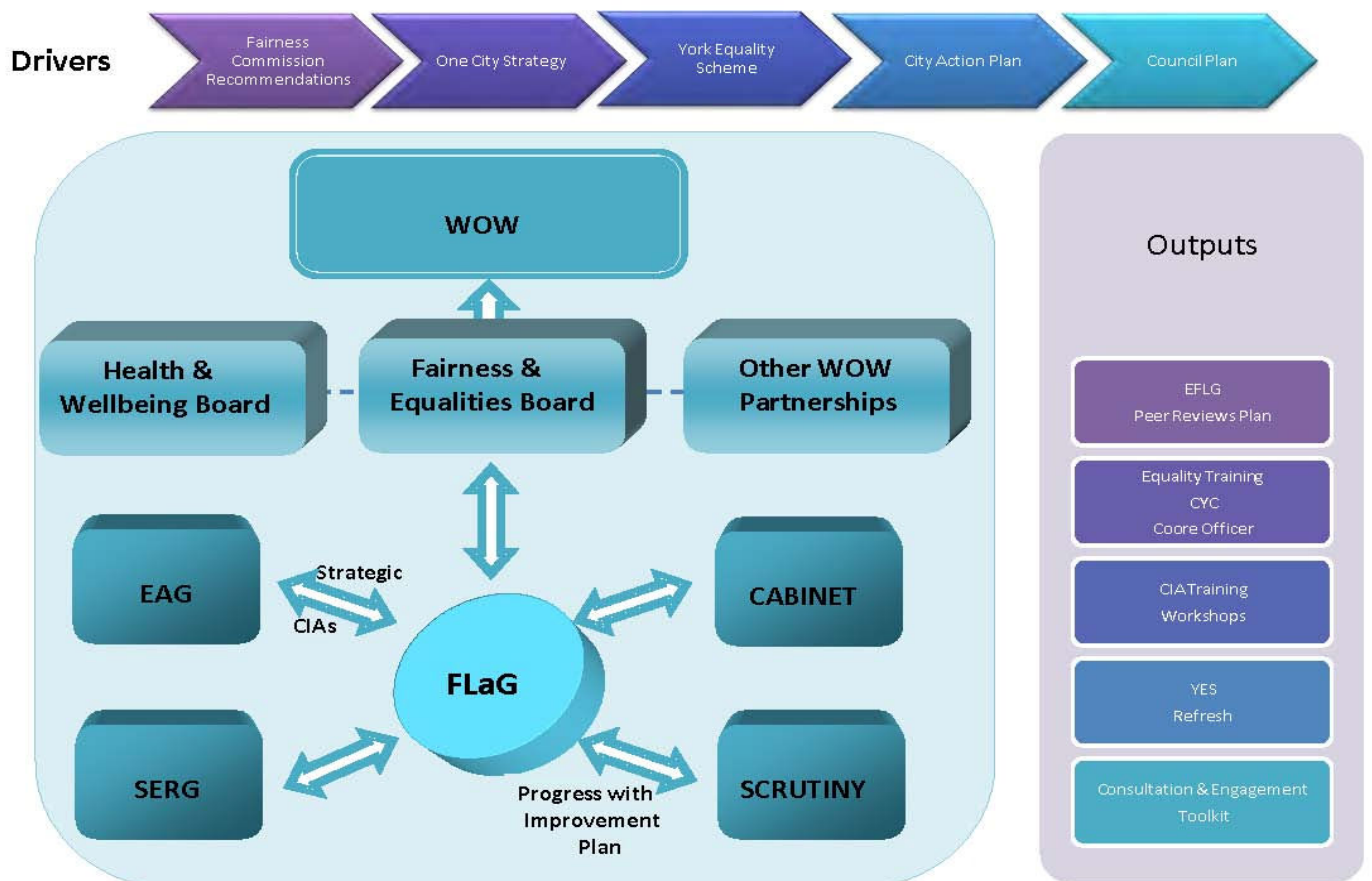
### **Background**

3. The Council's vision is for an equal, inclusive, and welcoming Council and city. The York Equality Scheme shows how we will make sure that everyone enjoys the excellent quality of life our city offers. This means enjoying long, healthy and fulfilling lives in good housing, with excellent opportunities in work, education, training, self-development and participation in public life, safety and security in family and social life, and the chance to enjoy diverse and inclusive culture and leisure opportunities.
4. To support our ambitions we are committed to move on from our current level of 'Achieving' under the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG), gained in July 2011, to get to 'Excellent' in early 2014/15.

5. Progress is set out below structured around the themes of the Equalities Framework for Local Government Excellent (EFLG):
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
  - Knowing your communities and equality mapping
  - Community engagement and satisfaction
  - Responsive services and customer care
  - A modern and diverse workforce

### The New Governance Arrangements

6. Governance arrangements for equalities have been refreshed and strengthened to provide for strong leadership at city level, together with opportunities for members, stakeholders, and representatives of communities of identity to challenge and scrutinise decision-making. The following table shows the main forums.



7. The main points to note are as follows:
8. **The Fairness and Equalities Board:** This new board, which will be chaired by Professor Dianne Willcocks CBE, will comprise private, public and voluntary sector representatives. Its priorities will be:
  - a. A fairer York – narrowing the gap in equality outcomes
    - To maintain an overview of progress being made to use data better to understand the issues and challenges faced by communities of identity and to use this to narrow the gap in equality outcomes.
  - b. Respecting and celebrating diversity
    - To create more opportunity to celebrate diversity through multi-cultural and multi-faith initiatives.
    - To help faith communities to increase access to appropriate facilities and places of worship.
  - c. An enabling, positive diverse workforce
    - To increase corporate social responsibility amongst the city's employers.
    - To build social factors into citywide procurement and contracting processes.
9. Recruitment of members is ongoing and there has been a very encouraging spread of applications. The first meeting will be in September. The terms of reference and membership categories are attached at Annex 1.
10. **The Fairness Leadership Group (FLAG):** This is charged with leading the equalities agenda at officer level reporting to the Corporate Management Team. Leads have been appointed at either Assistant Director Level or Head of Service level for each of the EFLG strands. The strand leads link in with various corporate groups such as the performance and policy group, which ensures that fairness and equalities is embedded in business and service planning, the workforce strategy group, dealing with work force issues, and the corporate customer and community engagement network, which ensures that fairness and equality principles are embedded in customer contact and engagement.
11. **The Equalities Advisory Group (EAG):** A review of EAG's remit has been completed by Cabinet drawing on feedback from EAG. The first meeting of the new EAG took place on 5 June. A workshop format has been adopted with EAG focussing on Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) of strategic significance.

A review of the invitees has been undertaken to ensure representation of all communities of interest. The remit is to:

- a. Advise the Council's Cabinet on key strategic Community Impact Assessment working on a rolling annual plan
  - b. Advise the Council on Community of Identity issues
  - c. Build contact between equality groups and individuals in York
12. EAG will also be involved in reviewing progress of the York Equality Scheme. EAG will meet quarterly in the workshop format. In between these meetings there will be meetings with each of the four Departmental Management Teams in turn. These will replace the annual meeting with CMT and the budget consultation meeting allowing more time for the communities of identity to address issues of concern to them and to discuss budget priorities across the year.
13. At the recent EAG meeting the initial issues that the group wished to talk to the Departmental Management Teams about were identified as:
- Parking and transport
  - Re-use of empty properties
  - Implementation of new benefit arrangements
  - Procurement and contracts in relation to the Equalities Act
  - Implementation of the Living Wage across the city
  - A potential Dignity Charter
14. **Staff Equalities Reference Group (SERG):** SERG carries out many staff consultation events on Council policies, procedures and practices and the work of the group has primarily been policy driven. To further improve and streamline the work of this volunteer group, from September 2013 SERG will have more of a strategic focus initially around 3 COIs: Disability, Race and Gender with a change of emphasis on the way SERG approaches future staff engagement in that it will be less policy driven but place more emphasis on staff awareness. More detail on the work of SERG can be found at:  
[http://colin.york.gov.uk/beSupported/equalities\\_inclusion/SERG/](http://colin.york.gov.uk/beSupported/equalities_inclusion/SERG/)
15. **Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee:** To strengthen scrutiny arrangements reports will be brought to this committee every six months. The committee will also be involved in the EFLG self-assessment. In addition, the committee is asked to consider how the Overview & Scrutiny Committees can help to strengthen the Council's equalities performance through their scrutiny work and address the need for improvement in Members understanding of equalities issues by considering options for appropriate member training.

## **Progress against the EFLG Framework**

16. The following analysis is drawn from self-assessment undertaken by FLaG and a 'Show Casing Excellence' event with a broad cross-section of senior managers who were asked to provide evidence in each of the categories.

### ***Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment:***

17. In taking fairness and equalities forward we are working to ensure that there is a coherent, shared vision of equality for the local area, with clear priorities agreed and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector. We need senior officers and politicians to own and articulate a clear narrative about local equality priorities and how they are being addressed. The Fairness and Equalities Board will provide leadership in this area, identifying two or three key priorities at city level, and putting in place action plans to ensure that they are delivered.
18. To ensure fairness is embedded within all that we do we have published our equality objectives and progress against these (a requirement of the Equalities Act 2010). We have also produced a challenging equalities improvement plan to assist on our journey to 'Excellent'. We have launched the York Equality Scheme – A Fairer York which sets out our vision for equality and inclusion and endorses the Ten Fairness Principles created by the Fairness Commission covering health, incomes and work, education, housing, diversity and community life.
19. York's Equality Scheme is targeted at the Communities of Identity:
- Those living in the most deprived wards in York
  - Older People, Older People with disabilities
  - Those with disabilities (learning and physical)
  - Those with mental illness
  - Families out of work
  - Lone Parents, Pregnant women, Teenage mums
  - 16-24 year olds
  - Young People with mental health issues, learning difficulties, disabilities
  - Young People Leaving Care, Looked after Children, Children in Poverty on Free school meals, Children with Special Educational Needs, Gypsy and Traveller Children
  - Gypsy and Travellers, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community
  - Carers

20. **Areas of Concern:** The pace of change around Fairness and Equalities has been fast. It is important that all key stakeholders are able to clearly articulate the equality priorities, the outcomes to be achieved and how changing needs are being met. It is also important that high profile programmes e.g. Smarter York and the neighbourhood working model deliver equality outcomes. The recent self-assessment work has highlighted that not all key stakeholders are at the same place in their understating of our ambitions. It is crucial that through effective communication this understanding is further embedded within the Council with partners and voluntary sector organisations.

21. **Action:** Corporate Communications have developed a communication plan and have identified resources to implement it.

***Knowing our Communities and responding to changing needs:***

22. To meet the above criteria we need to be able to demonstrate that we have good quality information on the equality profile of our communities and their changing needs, which is regularly updated and used to inform planning and monitor outcomes. In addition, partners will need to demonstrate how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities.

23. The Business Intelligence Hub through Experian customer profiling hold a considerable amount of information on York's Equality Profile and changing needs. Ward profiles have been produced covering a range of topics, Customer Equality Maps are available, and census information is published on the website. This enables analysis of the equality profile of our communities and their changing needs. This is regularly updated and used to inform key priorities.

24. **Areas of Concern:** EFLG peer reviewers will be examining whether gaps have been identified in terms of who is using particular services, why this might be, and what actions have been taken to address the gap. Discussions at the Show Casing Excellence event with managers revealed that some individual services had this information and were taking actions to address this; however there is a lack of consistency in this area and no overall corporate picture.

25. **Action:** The Business Intelligence Hub will:

- undertake work to identify which groups do not take up key services and develop actions that tackle any likely barriers
- develop protocols for sharing information with partners

26. **Priorities and Changing needs:** The York Equality Scheme focuses on York's Communities of Identity to improve equality of opportunity in the following areas:
27. **Reducing income inequalities across the city and minimising the impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012:** For the first time since 2007, average earnings for full time workers resident in York have risen above the national average. Average earnings for those working in jobs in York have also increased and York now sits second highest in the region for workplace pay, which shows significant progress in this area.
28. York nonetheless has a number of challenges concerning poverty. Around 13,000 of our citizens reside in the most deprived 20% of areas. The number of children living in poverty (4,450) is increasing. Poverty in York, although below the national average, is on the increase. The Government's welfare reforms in the absence of growth in adequately paid jobs will create specific problems in 2013/14 and beyond. The Council has combined forces with a number of partners, including the York Press and the CAB, to tackle the effects of poverty within the city.
29. The Council and its partners have formed a Poverty Action Steering Group to develop a city-wide response to increasing poverty in the city. It is working together with Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York Press, York CAB, South Yorkshire Credit Union, the York Economic Partnership and the York Community chaplaincy towards the shared aspiration that York will become poverty-free.
30. All strands of work across the Council that support financial inclusion have been brought together under a Financial Inclusion Steering Group, which has funding to support new work.
31. The Living Wage has been introduced for Council staff with 570 staff at grades 1 and 2 benefiting from the introduction. The Council has also moved to pay an apprentice living wage which has helped those earning the lowest pay in the organisation.
32. An extra £50k of Council funding was added to Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) funding to create the York Financial Assistance Scheme whilst £80k of Economic Infrastructure funding was pledged to support the successful joint Big Lottery bid with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to develop closer partnership working with information and advice partners and increase the quality of benefit and money advice in the city.
33. To mitigate the effects of welfare reform on rent arrears and increases in other debt a corporate Welfare Reform Task group has been established which includes voluntary sector partners.

Residents directly affected by changes have been identified and a range of initiatives to raise awareness and provide support is underway including: the creation of two 'Community Debt & Employment Adviser' posts to provide advice on debt, benefits, and training and employment opportunities to individuals and families.

34. A Housing Options service is up and running using £27k DWP grant to target advice and support to tenants affected by Local Housing Allowance changes in collaboration with Salvation Army. A 'gateway service' is also offering a drop-in and telephone advice service provided by CAB and partners.
35. The Council received funding to pilot an innovative community energy switching scheme in the city. York's first Energy Smart Club will encourage consumers to work together to switch energy suppliers to get a better deal – with average savings of around £115 on their fuel bills. The scheme will be targeted in particular to areas experiencing fuel poverty although it will be open to anyone in York. £447k of Department of Energy and Climate Change funding was awarded to install heating and insulation in the homes of fuel poor vulnerable residents. Photovoltaic panels have been installed on over 400 council homes with a target for a further 380 homes
36. Carbon Emissions Reduction Target funding has also helped residents receive over 1,200 energy efficient measures within their homes worth £341,000 and the council has also received £123,000 to trial insulations for solid walls and £447,000 to help vulnerable residents with heating systems.
37. **Increasing Employment and Training Opportunities:** York has attracted 800 new jobs to the city, a key highlight being Hiscox bringing 300 – 500. In supporting the distinctiveness of the city a new brand for independent retailers, "Proudly in York" has been developed.
38. Helping residents into employment and ensuring they have the skills to take up employment opportunities remains a key commitment. Workforce skills are ranked 3rd best out of 64 cities. Long term youth unemployment (16-24 year-olds) has now levelled off locally and has remained stable at 0.4% from September, and has fallen to 0.3% in December – well below the national and regional figures (currently 1.0% and 1.4%). Work is ongoing to address these issues. Two Jobs Fairs run in partnership between the Council and Jobcentre Plus took place in 2012 & 2013, attracting circa 1500 attendees. These will be a regular feature in the city during 2013 and beyond.



An apprenticeship programme has given a large number of people the chance to learn new skills within the Council's teams and the city as a whole supports over 1600 apprentice positions.

39. The implementation of Raising the Participation Age Delivery plan is having positive effects on apprenticeship starts for 16-19 year olds which continue to increase and shows York resident starts 16-18 Year olds at 340 (318 Q4 2011, 301 Q4 2010). Work streams around retention of Year 12 students on A level programmes are underway with all 5 school sixth forms and York College. An additional Transitions and Participation Adviser in Youth Support Services is being provided through DfE project funding in 2012/13 to support the progression of young people with Special Educational Needs. Participation of 16 year olds following the September Guarantee monitoring period was 95.2%, a new record high figure.
40. The Council welcomed the news that Leeds City Region Partnership has secured £4.6m in government funding to support proposals to boost apprenticeships in the area. As part of the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), York will benefit from the initiatives that will seek to generate 2,500 additional apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds over the next three years, primarily with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Under the plans, York will be home to one of eight 'Apprenticeship Hubs' to be created in the region. The hubs will work to persuade and inform smaller businesses of the benefits of employing young apprentices and reduce the bureaucracy involved in taking them on as well as improving the information available to young people and their parents.
41. Latest figures show that York's unemployment rate was 2.1% in December (JSA claimants) whilst national & regional rates are at much higher levels (3.7% and 4.7% respectively). This represents a continuation of the trend over the last two years of York positively increasing the gap between our local unemployment rate and the regional/national rate. There has been a decrease in the number of Young People who are NEET. Adults with learning disabilities in employment are currently exceeding the target of 10% and the latest data shows performance at 20.66%.
42. **Areas of Concern:** The proportion of full-time workers has decreased by 8.1 percentage points since 10/11, the region and GB reducing by 0.9 and 0.2 percentage points respectively. This means that the part-time proportion has increased by the same percentage points.

There is some evidence that males are also taking on second jobs to account for the shift from full to part-time in their primary jobs. This could affect the poverty agenda.

43. **Action:** Work is now focusing on part-time pay rates and wage levels for the lowest paid full-time workers to ensure that all York residents benefit from the economic prosperity of the city.
44. **Meeting Housing Need and decency and tackling homelessness:** Last year the Council built its first council houses in the city for 20 years, 19 council homes were completed and 115 affordable homes were built. To meet future housing challenges the Council has made a commitment to invest £7m in the Get York Building initiative to expand our housing sector and increase affordable housing in the city. This scheme includes building new homes and council homes, bringing forward stalled brownfield developments quickly and reviewing planning policy to support sustainable growth.
45. The Local Plan sets out ambitious targets to build between 1,090 -1,250 new homes per annum and by 2030 deliver over 20,000 dwellings. By 2015 we expect almost 100 new affordable new homes to be completed and around 200 to start on site including up to 60 new council homes.
46. A £800k project to refurbish 84 post-war non-traditional Orlit council properties including re-roofing, loft insulation, double-glazing and structural repairs were undertaken.
47. To improve housing condition of the Gypsy and Traveller Community £342,000 of funding was awarded from the Homes and Communities Agency to provide six additional traveller pitches. A new 'Travellers' Choice' refurbishment scheme was also launched to deliver a programme of improvements informed by customer preference.
48. A Landlord accreditation scheme was agreed and is being developed to improve housing conditions in the private sector.
49. The 'Positive Ageing Housing Guide for Older People' was launched during City of York Council's first ever Housing Week. The guide was drafted in consultation with Age UK, York Housing Association, Yorkshire Housing, Older Citizens' York and York Older Persons' Assembly.
50. Following several stakeholder consultation events, the new Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 was agreed by Cabinet in March. In addition, £279k of Department of Communities and Local Government funding was awarded to York and North Yorkshire to tackle rough sleeping, with delivery to be overseen by York.#

The No Second Night Out rough sleeper scheme was formally launched in January. 92 Holgate Road hostel underwent extensive redevelopment which will save £260k in bed & breakfast costs a year. £2m funds were identified for the redevelopment of Ordnance Lane hostel.

51. After a successful first year of operation, Howe Hill 4 Young People will be the permanent provider of temporary accommodation and education services for homeless young people; however, the number of homeless households with dependent children living in temporary accommodation has reduced as has the number of 16 to 17 year olds accepted as homeless.
52. The Council supported the launch of StreetLink, a new telephone line and website to help link those sleeping on the street with local advice and services. This allows a member of the public to alert the Salvation Army Early Intervention and Prevention Team, who will then assess the person and if appropriate they will be offered emergency accommodation in a place of safety.
53. With 99 households in temporary accommodation at March 2013, homelessness remained stable at 1.18% per 1000 households, below the national average of 2.38%. Housing Options exceeded their target for the number of households prevented from homelessness. The number of homeless households with dependent children living in temporary accommodation has reduced also the number of 16 to 17 year olds accepted as homeless.
54. The challenges of the welfare reform act will have an impact on homelessness and the implementation of the Homeless Strategy allows an interagency response to this.
55. **Increasing the number of good quality flexible child care provision:** The Early Years Delivery Plan to increase the take-up of childcare places by eligible two year olds is currently underway. Analysis of questionnaires with providers has been completed and Communication Strategy agreed. Places will be available from September 2013. The government expects approximately 300 eligible two year olds in York to take up places from September 2013 and a total of 700 by September 2014.
56. **Finding ways for older and disabled people to remain in their homes for as long as possible:** Adult Social Care priorities include providing high quality services for people with dementia, greater investment in telecare to support people in their own homes, safeguarding vulnerable adults and managing the capacity of community based services to provide support for people at home.

57. To tackle these challenges, the Council has doubled the capacity of its re-ablement service for people coming out of hospital, and is working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on creating a dementia-friendly city.
58. As part of the Council's care home modernisation programme, nine current Elderly Persons' Homes (EPHs) are to be replaced with two modern, built for purpose care home facilities providing specialist residential care for people with dementia care and high dependency care needs. The Council is shortly to tender for the design and construction of two new homes providing a total of 162 places.
59. There are 4 dedicated Telecare Technicians and they are providing assessment, advice and installation for all telecare customers. (Approx 1700 to date.)
60. **Educational Attainment:** It has been an encouraging year in terms of educational attainment. The percentage gap between free school meal and non free school meal pupils has narrowed for Level 4+ in English and Maths. This trend has continued for achievement of 5+A\*-C (including English and Maths).
61. There has also been a positive trend for the % of children in care reaching Level 4 in Maths at KS2 has increase. Although the % of children in care achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at KS4 (including English & Maths) has decreased.
62. In terms of the % of pupils from a minority ethnic group (white or other) containing more than 30 pupils who achieve L4+ in English and Maths at KS2 69% pass rate was achieved below the target set of 78%.
63. Training courses are continuing for traveller women in conjunction with the Travellers Trust, to develop 'employability' skills in literacy, self confidence, and communication skills. Following excellent attendance on Strengthening Families programme, a literacy course was established at Clifton Children's Centre, run by Family Learning. Again, this drew excellent attendance and progression towards qualifications. A Traveller Literacy group at St Lawrence's children's centre was very well attended with women gaining qualifications at the end of last year continuing to attend.
64. **Improving Health and Wellbeing:** In the last year the Health and Wellbeing Board has been established. PCT function has transferred over to the Local Authority and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being implemented.

65. A steering group has been established to oversee and promote York's aspiration to become a 'Dementia Friendly' community working with businesses, shops and services to support them to become more 'dementia friendly' and accessible.
66. A Health Needs Assessment of Gypsy and Traveller Communities living in York is currently underway. The aim of this work will be to identify and prioritise need, helping to inform the Gypsy and Traveller strategy and its actions for the future.
67. Intervention and advice training sessions to health professionals aligned to the National Centre for Smoking Cessation aimed at reducing smoking amongst young people and pregnant women is being delivered.
68. Targeting of bespoke work for substance misuse to care leavers and the development of care packages to ensure safe transition to adult services is now being overseen by a transitions worker situated in Atlas, the young people's service.
69. The Looked after Children Support Service commenced operation in December 2012 as planned, under the supervision of a newly appointed practice manager.
70. The Umbrella Café, an employment project led by the Community Recovery Team at Sycamore House (a community resource centre for people recovering from mental health conditions) has won an award from Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust for 'Positive Experience'. The Café offers specialist support to develop vocational skills enabling progression to enter or return to the work environment. The award recognises the way the service empowers and involves those they work with and is a strong accolade for our staff from the new Mental Health Trust who took over responsibility for mental health services in York earlier this year. Sycamore House is a Council resource which works as part of the integrated mental health service with Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust.
71. £252,705 of National Lottery funding from Sport England's Inclusive Sport fund has been secured to maintain targeted sport and health provision for disabled people in York. The funding will help maintain a three-year programme to extend sport and exercise activities across the city for residents with a medical condition and for those with a physical, sensory and/or learning disability.
72. **Areas of Concern:** There has been a year on year increase in reported incidents of domestic violence between 2008 and 2013; the outcome for 2012-13 shows a 12% rise in domestic incidents.

Excellent work has been undertaken recently within York to provide support in relation to high-risk cases of domestic abuse.

73. Analysis by the Safer York Partnership points to alcohol as the most significant factor influencing levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in York based on a complex set of overlapping indicators and is a major factor on the impact of poor health. A Key priority for the Council and partners is to deal with the adverse effects that alcohol causes.
74. **Action:** York's specialist Domestic Violence court and independent domestic violence advisers are regarded as examples of good practice and excellent relationships have been developed to support services provided through third sector provision. The Council is looking to adopt a stronger early intervention and prevention approach across services to ensure intelligence is more widely shared so early action can be taken.
75. The Community Safety Partnership is examining the role that alcohol plays in incidence of recorded crime, in particular in the city centre. The Night-safe Steering Group is being replaced by the AVANTE task group (Alcohol Violence and the Night Time Economy), and the remit and terms of reference for this group are in development.
76. An alcohol and substance misuse strategy is currently in development. The Council and city partners have commissioned a national charity to launch England's first Recovery College to support people overcoming alcohol and substance misuse. Modelled on a successful community project run in Glasgow, the Wired into Recovery charity trains people who are successfully recovering from addiction to support others going through the recovery process. York's Recovery College will be led by volunteer graduates of the Glasgow College who have themselves recovered and are now in paid employment. YACRO have purchased a 4 bed house specifically for people in drug and alcohol recovery and have committed to develop this self-funding model of sober-living accommodation over the next 5 years.
77. **Respecting and celebrating diversity and tackling hate crime:** The Community Safety Plan has been refreshed and a Hate Crime Strategy agreed. The latest figures on hate crime show that there has been a decrease.
78. A number of high profile events have been established including: York's International Festival a celebration of faith and culture, Holocaust Memorial Day and International Women's Week.
79. York's Human Rights City Project held its first Open day festival for social justice and human rights organizations in York.

The aim of this event was to give the community the opportunity to interact with a range of different social justice organisations and groups that are active in York. York Human Rights City project is a network that aspires to promote a community based on social justice and human rights.

***Community engagement and satisfaction:***

80. To ensure the widest possible involvement of residents including those from the various communities of identity the Neighbourhood Working Model has been revised. Community of Identify Plans are underway including with the LGBT community.
81. The Council has been working on open innovation strategy and in December 2012 the GeniUS project was voted overall winner and winner of the community engagement award at the prestigious Guardian Public Service Award. Last year the GeniUS! Forum posed a challenge to people to come up with ideas on how older people could be helped to live safely in their own homes for longer. One suggestion was for a place where older people and their carers could try out the latest telecare technology in a real life home environment. York's first Independent Living Telecare show flat opened at Alex Lyon House, equipped with the latest technology to help older people live safely and independently in their own homes. The show flat opened up to viewings allowing older people to visit to see the latest technology available.
82. A further GeniUS Challenge was launched to find out what we do to make York a more Dementia friendly City? The winning idea is based around running a programme of special assemblies in schools once a year. This will give students the opportunity to talk to people with dementia and carers and will be linked to a competition asking students to make a film about dementia or use social media or other ways to increase awareness amongst their peer groups.
83. A great deal of consultation has been taking place with children and young people. Following consultation with young people the Young People's Website for 11-18 year olds in the city was launched. [Yor-zone.org.uk](http://Yor-zone.org.uk) is a place where young people in the city can find support and advice on a variety of issues such as jobs, money, health, drugs, alcohol and disabilities. Designed by young people, it is a one-stop shop for information about activities and events around the city.

84. In order to understand how international students can be made to feel more welcome in the city students on the International Foundation Programme and other international student volunteers came together with representatives of the community in York to discuss the experiences of international students in the city. The event, entitled 'Community Conversations', was hosted by York St John University. International Discussions covered some of the issues facing international students in the city.
85. **Areas of Concern:** It is hoped that this revised framework will increase resident satisfaction with their ability to influence decisions which stood at just 29% in 2012.
86. **Action:** Positive work around engagement is taking place; however, further work is required including:
- Community Engagement remains a key priority for the Building Strong Communities Board
  - Work is underway to fully embed the revised Neighbourhood Working model supported by an effective communication plan

***Responsive Services and Customer Care:***

87. In taking forward the York Equality Scheme and meeting the EFLG excellence criteria we need to be able to demonstrate that Individual services across the authority can show improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered. We also need to show that we have a consistent corporate approach to commissioning and procurement and can demonstrate that commissioned / procured services are supporting our equality objectives.
88. Our ability to demonstrate that services can show improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered is not in question there are numerous examples some of which have been identified earlier in this report; however, we need to ensure that the commitment in the procurement and commissioning of services outlined in the Equality Scheme and the EFLG improvement plan are delivered.
89. Feedback from the previous inspection found that procurement and equalities is very much a work in progress. Inspectors found that this area did not necessarily meet the Achieving level although they saw evidence to suggest that during 2011 –2012 there would be considerable progress.
90. In taking forward the equalities improvement agenda a number of achievements have been made:



- A Procurement Strategy has been developed and is being implemented.
- A Procurement Equality Charter has been agreed and contractors are being asked to sign up to it.
- Work in supporting the Council and voluntary organisation as part of our commitment to be a Cooperative Council is underway and new service delivery models are being agreed and taken forward with respect to the Library and Archives Service and the Warden and Telecare service.

91. **Areas of Concern:** Whilst progress has been made in implementing improvement actions it has slowed as a consequence of staff changes and vacancies. These concerns have been raised with the Assistant Director for Finance Asset Management and Procurement.

92. **Action:** The new procurement arrangements currently being implemented will take forward the equality improvement actions.

***A Modern and Diverse Workforce:***

93. To embed equalities within our work force and meet the EFLG Excellent criteria we need to demonstrate that prioritised equality outcomes for the whole workforce are being achieved through the collective impact of a range of processes. We need to show movement towards greater equality in our workforce profile, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation and that action is taken to address any adverse trends identified from the monitoring and analysis of employment data.

94. We also need to demonstrate that councillors understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources and services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities.

95. Over the last year we have achieved the following:

- a. The Workforce Development Strategy is being implemented which identifies equality outcomes for the workforce that are to be achieved. A refresh of the strategy is currently underway
- b. An Equal Pay audit has recently been completed
- c. The Council has introduced the 'Living Wage'
- d. The Council-wide apprenticeship programme was launched in 2011: 69 placements have been made since then providing fixed term employment opportunities. An apprenticeship strategy has been developed providing career pathways for apprenticeships.

The main thread of the proposed strategy is to convert existing posts to apprenticeships in line with business need. This approach will ensure that the Council maximises the benefits of its apprenticeship offer, helping to ensure that the skills it needs and has developed stay within the organisation, providing a clear career pathway and understanding from the outset of the role the apprentice will fill at the end of the programme. The strategy will:

- Increase pay rates to £4.98 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 rising to £6.19 after 12 months
  - Adopt a vacancy management approach
  - Identify specified posts to be considered as Apprenticeships
  - Offer a limited number of supernumerary positions
- e. Following the results of 2011 staff survey a Dignity at Work policy to address issues of bullying and harassment is being implemented. Results of this year's staff survey are expected in July and will determine if improvements have been made.
- f. A review of key HR policies including a review and strengthening of the flexible working arrangements has taken place with the aim of allowing more of a work/life balance.
- g. A competency assessment framework which embeds equalities has been developed (yet to be rolled out).
- h. The Learning and Development offer has been strengthened through the Team York staff development programme. Initiatives include the Service to City leadership programme and Women in Leadership programme. In addition nearly 700 courses have taken place: 264 courses to the Adults Workforce; 182 courses to the Children's Workforce; 218 courses to the Early Years Workforce). 250 learning needs have been identified and prioritised, to be reviewed on a quarterly basis throughout 2013/14. A funding and delivery model to deliver corporate learning and development requirements in 2013/14 has been developed.
- i. YOR Wellbeing (an interactive health & wellbeing portal for City of York Council staff and their families) was launched in March and has been favourably received by staff who have used it.
- j. iTrent HR Self Service web based system allowing City of York Council employees to view and, in some cases, update some of the information held on the City of York Councils Human Resources database, is being implemented in phases.

96. **Areas of Concern:** The ability to demonstrate greater equality in our workforce profile, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation, is an area for concern. Over the last year very little recruitment has taken place; however, proactive work has taken place in the recruitment of apprenticeship with a number of initiatives being undertaken to recruit under-represented groups. Despite these campaigns female applicants, those between 16-18, those with a disability and not from a white background were low.
97. The Council does not currently have a Succession Policy. A Talent and Resourcing officer has been appointed in the HR restructure to work on succession planning. This will be prioritised in the next phase of planning for the delivery of the Workforce Strategy.
98. **Action:** To address the areas of concern the following are in progress:
- a. A target marketing campaign for the 2013/14 apprenticeship programme is to be undertaken focusing on under represented groups.
  - b. A Succession Policy is to be developed
  - c. CMT will be presented with a report identifying workforce trends within the council and how equality gaps are being addressed and work being undertaken around resourcing and talent management within the organisation.
99. **Monitoring and analysis of employment data at a corporate and service level:** The iTrent HR system has been phased in. Information at a corporate level is available. However data at Directorate level is currently not available. A comprehensive data cleansing programme is underway and directorate data should be available by December 2013.
100. **Areas of Concern:** Criticisms from the previous inspection outlined that the PDR system is driven by managers and is paper based. It provides little corporate data to inform training needs for example. PDRs should include equalities objectives but there is no mechanism for checking if this happens.
101. At the time of the last inspection it was anticipated that the iTrent performance module would be fully operational replacing the old paper based system. Due to delays with iTrent implementation it is unlikely that this module will be fully operational until April 2014.

102. **Action:** To mitigate the above weakness the Council can show that:

- a. A competency framework has been developed which embeds equality objectives within it. The framework will be considered by CMT shortly and this revised paper based system will be rolled out to managers for implementation.
- b. Although full iTrent implementation will not be achieved until April 2014, pilots of the iTrent modules will take place prior to full implementation so there will be documentation and examples of this for the mock inspection.

103. **Training:** Funding for staff training expired in November 2012 and no equality training was undertaken for councillors during 2012/13.

104. **Action:** To address these issues:

- a. A review of equality training has been completed and a pilot training event is taking place on the 13th of June. Councillor Crisp has been invited to attend to establish if this training would meet member requirements.
- b. A review of the pilot training programme and funding proposals to roll out a comprehensive training programme for staff and Councillors is to be considered by FlaG at their next meeting in July 2013.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- Comment on the Council's progress towards 'Excellent'
- Identify any further briefing that the committee requires in order to be able to provide effective scrutiny in this area
- Consider how it can help to strengthen the Council's performance in equalities, for example by ensuring that consideration of equalities is built into scrutiny activity

Reason: To progress the work of the Committee in line with scrutiny procedures and protocol.

## Contact Details

<b>Authors:</b>	<b>Chief Officer Responsible for the report:</b>		
Sharon Brown Performance and Service Improvement Officer	Charlie Croft Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm)		
Charlie Croft Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm)	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b> 14 June 2013
<b>Specialist Implications Officer(s)</b> N/A			
<b>Wards Affected:</b>			<b>All</b> ✓

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** The York Equality Scheme (Online)

**Annexes:** Annex 1 – Fairness and Equalities Board terms of reference