

**Decision Session – Cabinet Member for
Leisure, Culture & Tourism**

16 December 2013

Report of the Director of Communities & Neighbourhoods

Fairness and Equalities Progress Report

Summary

1. A key Council priority is to improve fairness of opportunity and reduce inequalities for York residents. Our ambition is far reaching. The purpose of this report is to show outcomes achieved in delivering against our ambition focusing on progress on equality objectives, equalities improvement plan, and implementation of York's Equality Scheme.
2. Overall good progress has been made in taking forward the council's fairness and equality priorities. Key achievements and priorities together with areas that need to be strengthened are set out in the *Taking Stock* document at Annex 1.
3. The process of 'taking stock' is a precursor to refreshing York's Equality Scheme. The next step will be taking account of new data including from the Big York Survey and the refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Consultation with communities will take place, including with the Equality Advisory Group, leading to a refresh of the York Equality Scheme in April, 2014.
4. To support our ambitions for fairness and equalities we are committed to move on from our current level of 'Achieving' gained in July 2011 under the Equalities Framework for Local Government to 'Excellent'. A peer review has provisionally been booked for week commencing 19th May 2014.
5. The Cabinet Member is asked to note:
 - the areas of achievement identified
 - the emerging issues from *Taking Stock and initial finding of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* which will be taken into account in the refresh of the York Equality Scheme

- the areas of concern and how these concerns are to be addressed and agree:
- to a process to refresh the York Equality Scheme by April, 2014
- that the peer review under the Equality Framework for Local Government takes place week commencing 19th May 2014.

Background

6. A key priority within the Building Strong Communities (BSC) theme of the Council Plan and thus a priority of the BSC Board is to develop cohesive and inclusive communities where no person or community feels left behind or disadvantaged. The Council launched York's Equality Scheme 'A Fairer York' December 2012 which focuses on York's Community of Identity (those characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010) to tackle inequalities.
7. York's Equality Scheme has three priorities:
 - Narrowing the gap
 - Respecting and celebrating diversity
 - An enabling, positive and inclusive workforce
8. York's Communities of Identity include those with protected characteristics protected under the Equalities Act 2010 which covers age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. Communities of Identity in York also include carers and those people living in the most deprived wards in York.
9. Narrowing the gap focuses on narrowing inequalities in relation to income inequality, employment and training, poverty, child care provision, access to affordable housing, enabling people to live independently, health and wellbeing, affordable and accessible transport and access to services and information for York's Community of Identity.
10. Crucial to the success of York's Equality Scheme is engaged and empowered residents. The Building Strong Communities Board is on a journey to 'Build Stronger Communities'; this concept is to progressively shift control to local people and communities, promoting greater self reliance and enabling more people to have control over their lives and in how services are delivered so better

quality of life outcomes are achieved.

11. The work on equalities is linked to the strategy to deliver a poverty free city that was agreed by cabinet on 15th July 2013. The Equalities work is working closely with the poverty work to assure that both work programmes are complimentary to achieving the overall vision of a poverty-free York.
12. In addition the Council has made funding available through the Delivery and Innovation Fund and the Economic and Innovation Fund to promote Economic Inclusion, create jobs, tackle poverty and social exclusion. The Council has also committed £7m to Get York Building in order to work towards meeting housing need and increase affordable housing for the city. Further funding has been made available to enable people to independently remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Headlines

13. Overall good progress has been made in implementing the Equalities Improvement Action Plan and the York Equality Scheme. With regards the Equality Improvement Action Plan, over the next few months the focus will be on:
 - Embedding the new equality governance arrangements
 - Implementing the communication plan for equalities and inclusion so members, staff and key stakeholders are able to clearly articulate a clear vision for equalities for York.
 - Identifying which groups do not take up services and develop actions to tackle barriers
 - Developing protocols for sharing information with partners
 - Ensuring that new procurement arrangements currently being implemented take forward equality improvement actions.
 - Implementing the council's new competency framework and revised PDR process which fully embeds equalities and inclusion within the framework and strengthens connections to the Council Plan.
 - Strengthening completion of equalities information for members and staff.
 - Developing the equalities training offer for staff and members.

14. A considerable amount of progress has taken place in implementing the York Equality Scheme. Positive outcomes have been made in the following areas:

15. **Income:**

- City of York Council introduced the 'Living Wage' with over 500 employees benefiting and are implementing a city wide campaign for other employers to do the same.
- The council is also paying an apprentice living wage that has helped those earning the lowest pay in the organisation.
- 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.
- Latest figures show that Customers & Carers receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets) - eligible customers only is increasing and is at 79.75%

16. **Employment /Unemployed:**

- Workforce skills are ranked 3rd best out of 64 cities
- Actions in York are demonstrating positive results on employment. Despite the slow economic recovery, York remains resilient, with a comparatively small loss of private sector employment (-3.7% between 2008 and 2012), whereas e.g. Leeds saw a loss of -9.2%. This strong employment market in York likely to continue with new businesses such as John Lewis and Hiscox recruiting this year
- York attracted 800 new jobs to the city, a key highlight being a deal with Hiscox to bring 300 – 500 jobs to the City. Two job fairs organised by the council have already seen over 1800 prospective candidates attend and £200k of EIF funding is being used to better connect residents to job opportunities, all helping to further drive down unemployment.
- Adults with Learning Disabilities in employment for 2012/13 were 38.58% a significant increase on 10.26% figure for 2011/12.
- IFS Families meeting the Troubled Families criteria for being out of work have action plans supporting them to make progress into work. Six families have achieved this since January.

A number of others are well on their way to being employed. Over the past year 485 families attended targeted parenting programmes an increase of 6 on the previous year.

- York has again seen a fall in the levels in unemployment with the new Jobs Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant count falling to its lowest figure since October 2008. Figures released October 13 have shown that there are currently 2195 claimants in York, a fall of 112 from last month and of 872 from the same time last year. The claimant count represents 1.6% of the working population and contrasts to the regional average which stands at 3.9%. The figures are also much lower than the national average which stands at 3%, showing York to be outperforming other cities regionally and nationally
- JSA claimants broken down by ethnicity at April 2013 is 0.88% and has remained stable since November 2012, falling from 1% August 2012
- The proportion of Workless Households in York is at its lowest point since 2005, at 13.2% (Dec 2012). This compares well to the much higher regional figure of 19.2% and the national figure of 18.1%.
- The proportion of Children in Workless households has also decreased over the same time period, another welcome downward trend as the council strengthens its approach to tackling poverty.
- Long term youth unemployment (16-24 year olds) has now levelled off locally and has remained stable at 0.3% (Sept 13) well below the national and regional figures (currently 0.9% and 1.4%)

17. NEETS:

- The % of Young People NEET reduced from 5.7% Nov 11 to 4.9% Nov 12 (Awaiting Nov 13 figures)
- % of care leavers in employment, education and training (Qtr 3 13/14 is 80% an increase on the year end figure which was 71%.
- 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).

18. **Child Care Settings:**

- Number of settings receiving good and better Ofsted judgments has increased from 80% to 88%. Childminders receiving good and better Ofsted judgments increased from 73% to 74%. Number of out of school clubs achieving good or better went from 63% to 65%.

19. **Educational Attainment:**

- Educational attainment results show significant and tangible improvement over the previous year putting York in a strong position regionally and nationally. Overall York's children are achieving good and improving results but there remains work to do in some of York's schools.
- York has achieved its best GCSE results with 67% of pupils achieving 5+A*-C including English and mathematics. This places York as one of the top (16th out of 152) Local Authorities in England.

20. **Free School Meal Pupils:**

- The difference in % points between pupils eligible for FSM and those who are not, achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 is 25% (2012/13). Narrowed by 11 over 3 years.
- % of FSM pupils achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 is 54% (2012/13). 16 %pt improvement over 3 years
- Difference in % points between pupils eligible for FSM and those who are not, achieving 5+A*-C (Inc E&M) at KS4 is 29.40% (2012/13). This compares to 28.9% for the previous year.
- % of pupils eligible for FSM achieving 5+ A*-C (Inc E&M) at KS4 was 39% (2012/13) and increase on the previous figure which was 36.2%.

21. **Looked after Children:**

- Previous figures show that there has been a positive trend for the % of children in care reaching Level 4 in Maths at KS2 has increased to 69% from 56%. Latest figures are awaited.

22. Special Educational Need Pupils:

- % of SEN (non-statemented) pupils achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 is 18%. There has been no variance over three years
- % of SEN children (non-statemented) achieving 5+ A*-Cs GCSE (or equivalent) including English & Maths at Key Stage 4 was 23% compared to 20% for the previous year.

23. Housing:

- In 2012/13 115 affordable homes were built just short of the target of 126
- The Council have committed funding to the Get York Building programme. Plans to build between 50 and 70 new homes as part of a first phase of new council housing are progressing.
- A £2m scheme to build 18 affordable homes in Elvington currently being developed by York Housing Association. This will be for people with a local connection and in housing need and is due for completion August 2014.
- The policy on Direct Exchanges and transfer concerning rent arrears has been relaxed - tenants with low level arrears can now exchange if they are affected by the spare room subsidy providing they demonstrate a commitment to reducing their debt. This has resulted in Completed Direct exchanges increasing by 70% on the same point last year, making best use of housing assets.
- 124 new student homes on Brownfield sites on Hull Road in September 2012 were completed.
- Birch Park Extra Care Scheme for people with Learning Disabilities opened. The scheme has 12 apartments benefiting 14 individuals.
- Latest figures show that the % of care leavers in settled accommodation is 100%
- 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.
- Landlord accreditation scheme has been launched

24. Homelessness and Prevention:

- Despite pressures created by welfare reform the level of rent arrears has remained stable from the same point last year. We estimate that approximately £50k of the current tenant rent arrears is due to the effects of the spare room subsidy. Over 600 council tenants are still affected by this policy change, but the work of the Money and Employment Advisers to offer advice to these tenants, and the changes to facilitate direct exchanges continue to help reduce this figure.
- The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation has reduced from 99 at year end (and at the same point last year) to 92 at Qtr1, which is a significant achievement, especially in relation to a 9% increase in this measure nationally. The number of homeless households with dependent children in temporary accommodation has also reduced. Welfare reform continues to contribute to a challenging context nationally with the number of homelessness decisions and acceptances increasing by 5% compared to the same point last year. In York, we are seeing an increase in numbers approaching us for assistance and advice, but the number formally presenting for decisions has decreased significantly (by 32%). This is due to the very proactive prevention work which is taking place, including the implementation of a dedicated Housing Options worker in the customer centre, who is able to deal with a significant proportion of customers without the need for a formal presentation. Customers are also helped into accommodation in the private rented sector through YorHome, and through North Yorkshire Home Choice for social housing.

25. Community Safety:

- York is still one of the safest cities in which to live, with overall crime figures predicted to reduce again, by 5% on last year. This aspect of York is well recognised by those who reside here; with the 2013 Big York Survey showing the percentage of residents who feel York is a safe place to live as increasing and the percentage of residents who think their local area is safe being stable.
- The numbers for all violent crime continue to reduce as do those for Hate Crime incidents, reducing for the fifth consecutive year: from 169 in 2009/10 to 95 in 2012/13 with the forecast at 84 for 2013/14.

26. Health and Wellbeing

- York has 100% of Schools with Healthy Schools Status and two schools with Enhanced status
- Provisional Looked after Children (LAC) numbers have reduced to 223 (Oct 2013) from April 2013 when numbers were 243. The Council's Keeping Families Together initiative is continuing to deliver an overall reduction in the number of children in public care. This initiative seeks to safely support more children at home in the care of their parents or extended family members. It also helps those children who are already looked after to move more quickly on to alternative permanent care. To support these arrangements, the Council has developed a 'new deal' for local foster carers to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of high quality local placements available for those children who do need to become looked after.
- The number of under 18 conception rates is also reducing. Teenage Pregnancy conception data received in February 2013, referring to 2011 data, indicates a continuing decline in teenage conceptions in the city, the 2011 rate being 25.3 per thousand females aged 15-17. This is currently below both the England and Regional rates.
- Smoking in pregnancy advisor delivered training to five participants. Bespoke sessions now incorporated into Babes in Arms Parents group and Howe Hill for young people. Preparatory work under way for forming the Tobacco Alliance. PSH Meetings arranged to ascertain sharing data on 'smoking in pregnancy and following childbirth'. The latest quarterly figures (Q4 2012/13) show that the percentage of women giving birth in York hospital who were known to be smokers at the time of delivery was 13.0%. The national average is 12.8% and the regional average is 17.1%. The trend for smoking at time of delivery in York is downwards.
- At year end the total number of customers benefiting from warden call and telecare was 3,131 an increase of 360 customers for the previous year 11/12.

Refresh of City of York Council's Single Equality Scheme ' A Fairer York'

27. The Taking Stock exercise has identified areas which will continue to be an area of focus in the refresh of York's Equality scheme to take place in the period up to April 2014.
28. A key evidence source for developing the existing and future Single Equality Scheme is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). A refresh of the JSNA is currently underway. Initial findings have revealed that on the whole the health and wellbeing priorities identified in the City of York JSNA in 2012 remain current. In depth work is to be undertaken in the areas identified below by March 2014:
 - Mental Health;
 - Frail Elderly;
 - Young People;
 - Gypsies and Travellers
 - Poverty
29. Taking into account the findings of the Single Equality Scheme 'Taking Stock' exercise and the initial findings and the five priorities for further work for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (all of which are key areas within the Single Equality Scheme. It would appear at this stage in the refresh of the Single Equality Scheme that the three Single Equality Scheme priorities remain the same. The initial refresh has also highlighted that continued focus on key issues identified previously remain unchanged. These issues are outlined under the relevant priority below.
30. The refresh of the Single Equality scheme will be further informed by the Equalities and Advisory Group and the results of the Big York Survey and the staff Health and Wellbeing Survey.

Narrowing the gap

31. **Income Inequalities:** Continue to increase the number of employers introducing the 'Living Wage and implement actions to mitigate the impact of welfare reform. Implement actions that focus on increasing part-time pay rates and wage levels for the lowest paid full-time workers
32. **Tackling Poverty:** Continue to tackle poverty in the City focusing on child poverty, fuel poverty and food poverty.

33. ***Increasing Employment and Training Opportunities:*** Continue to implement initiatives to increase the number of people employed with a particular focus on increasing the number of people in full time employment. Increase apprenticeship opportunities and the number of young people in Education, Employment and Training in particular care leavers, those with learning disabilities and those suffering from mental health issues.
34. ***Educational Attainment:*** Continue to implement raising the educational attainment of children on free school meals, looked after children, children with special educational needs and gypsy and traveller children.
35. ***Meeting Housing Needs and decency and tackling homelessness:*** Continue to implement the ‘ Get York Building ‘ programme to increase the number of new homes built in the City particularly the number of affordable homes, improve access to housing for BAME communities including Gypsy and Traveller families, young people, teenage parents, and those with disabilities and mental health issues. Tackling homelessness and homeless prevention again will be key actions for the Single Equality Scheme in the light of the impact of welfare reform.
36. ***Supporting Independent Living:*** Initiatives will continue to improve access to settled accommodation for those with a leaning disability and mental health need as will the work on increasing telecare provision enabling more people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible .
37. ***Improving Health and Wellbeing:*** Continue to focus on the health outcomes for carers and those with long term limiting disabilities and children who are overweight. Work will also continue on raising awareness and supporting those individuals with Autism and carry on the work of York being a ‘Dementia friendly City’. Initiatives will also focus on improving the health and wellbeing of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and the Council’s commitment to reduce the number of children in care.
38. ***Access to Information:*** Initiatives to improve access to information and services will also remain a key focus.
39. ***Community Engagement*** – To continue to deliver initiatives that support the Council’s Cooperative Council approach enabling customers and partners to redesign services which are co-owned and delivered together.

Respecting and Celebrating Diversity

40. The focus within the Single Equality Scheme will continue to develop initiatives that celebrate and respect York's Diversity. Reduce Hate Crime and tackle and support victims of domestic violence.

An enabling, positive and inclusive workforce

41. Analysis is underway of the staff and health and wellbeing survey. Relevant findings will inform the refresh of the Single Equality Scheme.

Consultation

42. The Council will continue to work with its Equalities Advisory Group on the refresh of the York Equalities Scheme.

Options

43. There are no options associated with this report.

Council Plan

44. Meets the Council Plan priorities of Building Strong Communities and Core Capabilities to ensure York residents and City of York council staff are not disadvantaged and fair and equitable services are provided.

Implications

45. There are no implications to note beyond those referred to in the report.

Risk Management

46. There are no risks associated with this report

Recommendations

47. The Cabinet Member is asked to note:
 - the areas of achievement identified
 - the areas of continued focus from *Taking Stock* and initial findings of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which will be taken account of in the refresh of the York Equality Scheme
 - the areas of concern and how these concerns are to be addressed and agree:
 - to a process to refresh the York Equality Scheme by April, 2014

- that the peer review under the Equality Framework for Local Government takes place week commencing 19th May 2014.

Reason: To meet our corporate commitments and provide a fair and equitable service to City of York residents and staff:

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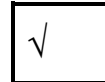
**Report
Approved**



Date 6 December
2013

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

**Annexes: Annex 1 Taking Stock
Annex of Abbreviations**