

Meeting of the Equality Advisory Group

18 July 2011

Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Equality Framework for Local Government Diversity Peer Challenge, 26 – 27 July 2011

About this report

This report is for information. It gives details about the council's Equality Framework for Local Government Diversity Peer Challenge that sometimes is also called "review" "inspection" or "external assessment". The challenge will take place on 26 and 27 July 2011.

The results will tell the council how it is performing in equality and diversity now and what it needs to do next to continue to improve.

The Equality Framework for Local Government

The framework is the national standard that measures council performance in equality and diversity work. It has been put together by the Local Government Information and Development (LGID), the national organisation that supports councils to improve continuously.

The framework combines the requirements of the British Customer Services Excellence Standard and of current equality legislation.

It has three levels of performance: Developing, Achieving and Excellent. The council will be assessed against level Achieving.

Diversity Peer Challenge

The "challenge" is an external assessment against the requirements of each of the levels of the framework.

The assessment is done by a team of "peer reviewers" or "peers". They are senior managers and councillors from other councils that are at level Achieving already. They will look at written evidence and also

visit York to interview councillors and officers as well as talk to partners including EAG community group representatives.

The peers will visit York on 26 and 27 July 2011 and have asked to meet with community group representatives who are members of EAG on 26 July to discuss equality and diversity work in York.

Council preparations

To prepare for the Peer Challenge, the council did a self assessment against level Achieving.

Overall this showed that the council meets (and in some cases exceeds) the requirements of level Achieving. It also showed that there was room for improvement.

Areas where the council found out is doing particularly well include:

- Senior councillors and managers are committed to equality and diversity.
- Services where we know the customer and their needs are very good and in many cases excellent, for example services for disabled children and young people.
- We work well with our partners to deal with socioeconomic disadvantage in neighbourhoods where it exists. Examples include work in Kingsway West, Bell Farm, Foxwood etc
- We have strong consultation and engagement ethos and processes, but they need to be co-ordinated better.

Areas for improvement include:

- Collecting and using up to date information about the needs of our customers and staff, across all of our services.
- Using the results of equality impact assessments to make improvements where possible, across all of our services.
- Using our buying power and grants we give to improve equality and inclusion outcomes in our city.

When the council finished its self assessment it asked other councils in Yorkshire and the Humber to check its findings. They looked at the evidence and agreed that the council is at level Achieving.

The council then sent its final self assessment report and supporting evidence as well as an improvement plan to the LGID in the middle of June 2011, so that the peers can go through the evidence before they

visit the council on 26 and 27 July.

What will happen after the peer challenge finishes

At the end of the two day visit, the peers will tell us whether the council meets the requirements of Level Achieving or not.

A couple of weeks after their visit they will send us a report about what they found and any recommendations they have for improvement.

Officers shall use this information to put in place an action plan that will get the council to Level Excellent , the top level of the framework, hopefully in the next 18- 24 months.

What are we asking EAG to do?

Officers are asking the group to note the report.

Reason: To ensure that the Equality Advisory Group knows about the peer challenge.

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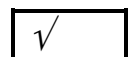
**Report
Approved**



Date

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report