

Executive

**1 December 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

## **Council Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12**

### **Summary**

1. The report documents the council's journey towards improving fairness and inclusion policy and practice and requests the Executive to approve the refreshed corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12 in Annex 1 (executive summary in Annex 2).
2. Progress with the strategy and scheme will be reported annually in the summer, when further refreshes may take place if needed. A major review will need to take place in May 2012 (see paragraph 7 below), by which time the Single Equality Act and associated Codes of Practice are expected to be in place.

### **Background**

3. **“Pride in our Communities” (PIOC) 2005-08**, the council's first inclusion and equality strategy and schemes, outlined the council vision for fairness and inclusion in the city:  
“York is a diverse city where everyone, regardless of their background, is able to take advantage of its benefits and opportunities, and is supported to contribute towards its future”
4. The vision was restated in the refreshed Corporate Strategy 2009-12:  
“We will do our best to make sure that all citizens, regardless of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender, feel included in the life of York. We will help improve prospects for all, tackle poverty and exclusion, and make services and facilities easy to access.’

5. In 2007/8 Council Management Team (CMT) identified the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS) as the corporate lead for fairness and inclusion. CMT also set up the corporate Equalities Leadership Group (ELG) to coordinate fairness and inclusion activity across Directorates. The ELG chaired by the HASS Director and incorporating the Directors of People and Improvement and Neighbourhood Services as well as senior officers from other Directorates, focused on developing and embedding a corporate Fairness and Inclusion system and standards. This includes common approaches across all directorates to:
  - a. Equality Impact Assessments
  - b. Equality profiling for our customers and staff
  - c. Equality and Inclusion Training and Development
  - d. Directorate Equality Schemes
  - e. Equality and Inclusion scorecards
  - f. Inclusive engagement
  - g. Equality in HR policy and practice
  - h. Equality in procurement and commissioning
  
6. In-house service manager briefings and service-specific training started in early 2008 and underpinned a programme of priority Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for 2008/9 that was completed in March 2009 as planned. The programme was made up of 18 EIAs. The 2009/10 programme currently incorporates 77 EIAs, with more coming on stream daily. Improvements achieved because of EIAs include, re-configuring the council internet site to make it easily accessible to all and changes being made to the Corporate Debt Policy so that it does not disadvantage people from the equality strands.
  
7. In June 2008, the corporate equality schemes 2005-2008 were refreshed for the period July 2008 to July 2009. Under current legislation, the Race and Disability schemes should be reviewed and updated every three years starting May 2002 and December 2006 respectively. The Gender scheme should be reviewed and updated every three years starting April 2007. There should be annual reports for each scheme. The Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12 updates all three previous schemes and will need to be updated by May 2012 at the latest ( the date the Race scheme will need to be updated by) unless the Single Equality Bill changes current timetables.

8. In February 2009, council was at Level 2 of the Equality Standard, working towards Level 3.
9. In April 2009, the Equality Standard for Local Government was reviewed and became the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The Framework has 3 levels: **Developing** (previously Levels 1&2 of the Standard), **Achieving** (previously Level 3 of the Standard) and **Excellent** (previously Level 5 of the Standard). Adopting the new Framework and working through its levels is a requirement of the annual Use of Resources Assessment. It also assures us that we meet the equality Duties.
10. The Standard was focused on process and governance. The Framework is focused on outcomes, especially ones that narrow the gap between people from the equality strands and the rest of the population in the following areas:
  - a. Longevity - including avoiding premature mortality.
  - b. Physical security - including freedom from violence and physical and or sexual abuse.
  - c. Health - including wellbeing and access to high-quality healthcare.
  - d. Education - including being able to be creative, to acquire skills and qualifications and having access to training and lifelong learning.
  - e. Standard of living - including being able to live with independence and security and covering: nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, utilities, social services and transport.
  - f. Productive and valued activities - such as access to employment, a positive experience in the workplace, work-life balance, and being able to care for others.
  - g. Individual, family and social life - including self-development, having independence and equality in relationships and marriage.
  - h. Participation, influence and voice - including participation in decision making and democratic life.
  - i. Identity, expression and self-respect - including freedom of belief and religion.
  - j. Legal security - including equality and nondiscrimination before the law and equal treatment within the criminal justice system.
11. A self-assessment against the new Framework took place in April 2009, showing CYC to be at Level Developing. The assessment identified areas for further improvement and these make up the

Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12 before the Executive today.

12. Currently we aim to reach Level Achieving by April 2011.

### **Consultation**

13. Please see Annex 3 for details of previous consultation and future actions to communicate and promote the strategy and scheme.

14. In July 2009, CMT considered the first draft of the strategy and scheme and requested that it should be put in a format that is accessible to the public and front line staff, starting with plain English. The version attached in Annex 1 and the summary in Annex 2 have been translated into plain English by a communications professional. Easy Read and other accessible versions will be produced shortly ( please see Annex 3).

15. It should also be noted that the font used throughout the strategy and scheme as well as in this report, is size 14 sans serif in line with recommendations made by the Social Inclusion Working Group.

### **Analysis**

16. The document in Annex 1 has been arrived at following extensive consultation with the relevant communities, the Social Inclusion Working Group, partners and staff. It comprises the corporate framework to be used by each Directorate to put in place Directorate Fairness and Inclusion (equality) single schemes and plans.

17. We need to publish a 3 year corporate single scheme to demonstrate how we intend to meet the duties we have under equalities legislation, by December 2009 (so as to meet the current requirements of the Disability Duty).

### **Corporate Priorities**

18. The strategy contributes to all themes of the Corporate Strategy 2009-12, particularly the Inclusive City and Effective Organisation themes.

## Implications

19. Financial – These are currently being assessed in each Directorate. However, there are three key areas for which the need for additional investment or re-orientation of resources has been identified:
  - a. Staff and councillor training. In 2008 this was estimated at £10,000 maximum per financial year, for classroom-based training for councillors, front line staff and service managers. More cost and time-efficient methods for training are being explored currently. For the training to contribute to positive changes it should be regularly updated and mandatory to attend, including for elected members.
  - b. Equality mapping. The current Corporate Equality Data Project, costing £27,000 per year, ends in April 2009. Equality customer insight is expected to become an integral part of CYC customer insight. However, we still need to continue to invest in collecting analysing and using other data about the experience and needs of our customers and staff from the equality strands.
  - c. Putting in place a community cohesion action plan for the city, working with LSP partners. This is expected to be put in place working within existing resources.
20. Human Resources (HR) – Time needs to be set aside for staff to undertake the training needed. This will be estimated in the relevant project plan.
21. Equalities - This strategy outlines the plans for this council's contribution to making York an inclusive city and meets council fairness and inclusion objectives as well as SIWG objectives.
22. Legal – The council has a duty in equality legislation to produce equality schemes and update them every 3 years (see paragraph 7 above). Part B of this strategy updates previous schemes and outlines this council's detailed plans for fairness and inclusion in service provision and employment between July 2009 and July 2012.
23. Crime and Disorder – The actions relating to delivering a community cohesion action plan for the city, will contribute to further reduction in crime and disorder in the city.

24. Information Technology (IT) – Costs relating to training are expected to be reduced, if council IT systems are developed to allow electronic/distance training to take place.

25. Property - None

26. Other - None

### **Risk Management**

27. The strategy and single scheme as well as the actions identified in paragraph 19 above, are essential to managing the risk of not meeting council and partners fairness and inclusion objectives as well as the requirements of equalities legislation (the Duties in particular), the Equality Framework for Local Government, the Audit Commission and allied inspectorates.

### **Recommendations**

28. The Executive is requested to approve the Fairness and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12 (Option 1).

### **Annexes**

**Annex 1 – Corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009/12**

**Annex 2 – Summary of strategy and scheme**

**Annex 3 - Consultation and communication log**

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Report Approved

Date *1 December 2009*

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report