

## **Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**11 January 2011**

Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

### **Fairness and Inclusion Update**

#### **Summary**

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on progress with fairness and inclusion matters in the council.
2. It focuses on actions arising from the corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy (FIS) and Single Equality Scheme (SES) 2009-12.
3. The report is for information.

#### **Background**

4. After a two-year period of consultation and development, the corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme were approved by the Executive in December 2009. An Easy Read version was produced and circulated within and outside the council. This can be found in Appendix 1.
5. The strategic aim is to make sure that people do not suffer disadvantage in council services and employment as a result of their:
  - **gender** (including trans people)
  - **disability**
  - **race**

- **age**
- **religion and belief**
- **sexual orientation**

6. To help achieve the aim, there are six areas of action:

- Know the community
- Leadership, partnership and commitment
- Engage with people from the equality strands
- Provide responsive services
- Have a modern, diverse workforce
- Take action in each directorate

As well as promoting fair and inclusive practice, these actions help the council to manage any risks associated with fairness and inclusion. Below are examples of recent action in each of these areas:

7. Know the community

- a) A corporate customer and staff equality profiling questionnaire that was developed with help from and approved by the Equality Advisory Group (ex Social Inclusion Working Group)
- b) Using the questionnaire to collect and analyse responses to a number of surveys including the Place Survey, the budget 2010 consultation, the housing status survey and the last staff survey. The results have been used to shape action plans like the One City Plan and the Workforce Plan.
- c) Holding focus groups for Black & Minority Ethnic people and young people, to boost Place Survey and other survey samples from these groups
- d) Using quantitative and qualitative data, putting in place the first ever city-wide profile for older people and children in poverty.

8. Leadership, partnership and commitment

- a) The development of One City Plan with Without Walls partners.
- b) Working with our partners to develop common approaches to equality and diversity policy and practice.
- c) Promoting equality and diversity in procurement, commissioning and grants

- d) Developing common standards for inclusive access to services across the council
- e) Promoting participation in civic and public life to people from the equality strands, starting with young people.

9. Engage with people from the equality strands

- a) Reviewing the Social Inclusion Working Group and renaming it the Equality Advisory Group (EAG), so as to clarify and sharpen EAG members' roles and responsibilities and EAG ways of working. The Group continues to advise the Executive on equality and diversity practice in the council. In the longer term, it is hoped that closer links with Inclusive York will make it possible for the Group to support and advise key council partners as well as the Executive.
- b) Setting up and fostering the development of the Staff Equality Reference Group (SERG). SERG has produced a number of advisory reports (called "products") that HR colleagues have used to complete relevant Equality Impact Assessments.

10. Provide responsive services

- a) A rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) incorporating the annual budget and More for York blueprints.
- b) Reviewing customer service procedures (such as the York Contact Centre) to make sure that they are accessible to people from vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- c) Reviewing the council internet site to make it more accessible.
- d) A rolling programme of equality and diversity training for staff and an equality and human rights pre-Council seminar.

11. Have a modern and diverse workforce

There are specific diversity objectives in the Workforce Plan 2010-12

12. Take action in each Directorate

Each directorate has produced a Single Equality Scheme. The schemes include action that each Directorate takes to contribute to the six corporate objectives.

13. The 2009-12 strategy and scheme will be reviewed in 2011 to take into account on-going feedback from EAG and SERG, the findings of peer reviews that comment on fairness and inclusion in the council, demographic changes in York, the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and local, regional and national developments - like the refresh of the council corporate strategy, the fairness and inclusion aims and objectives of Local Enterprise Partnerships and the publication of the coalition government's fairness and inclusion objectives.

### **Consultation**

14. The corporate Equality Leadership Group (ELG) and the Directorate Equality Leads (DEL) network have been involved in writing this report.
15. The ELG is chaired by the Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods who is mandated by Council Management Team to lead fairness and inclusion issues in the council. The ELG meets regularly to track progress with the corporate strategy and scheme.
16. The DEL is a group of senior officers who lead on and support fairness and inclusion activity in each directorate.

### **Corporate Priorities**

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

### **Implications**

18. Financial – None arising from this report
19. Human Resources (HR) – The strategy and single scheme provide the framework for fair and inclusive employment policies and practices, now further developed in the Workforce Plan.
20. Equalities - The strategy and single scheme support councillors and officers to promote fairness and inclusion in everything we do
21. Legal – The strategy and scheme ensure that the council meets key legal requirements as in the Equality Act 2010 and legislation that preceded it.

- 22. Crime and Disorder – None arising from this report
- 23. Information Technology (IT) – None arising from this report
- 24. Property - None arising from this report
- 25. Other - None arising from this report

### **Risk Management**

- 26. The strategy and single scheme as well as the actions identified in the body of the report help the council to manage the risk of not meeting council fairness and inclusion objectives as well as the requirements of equalities legislation.
- 27. The risks are recorded in the corporate risk register and reviewed regularly by the Equality Leadership Group.

### **Recommendations**

- 28. None. This report is for information

### **Annexes**

**Annex 1 – Corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009/12 - Easy Read version**

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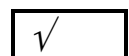
**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 30.12.10

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



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