
**Corporate and Scrutiny Management
Committee**

9 September 2013

Report of the Performance and Service Improvement Manager (CAN and CES)

Criteria for Achieving Excellence for the Equality Framework for Local Government

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the criteria for achieving Excellence for the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) attached at **Appendix 1** and provide an update on progress in implementing the Excellence Equalities Improvement Action Plan against each of the EFLG performance areas. The status for each improvement action is attached at **Appendix 2**.

Summary and Background

2. Overall good progress is being made in implementing the Excellence Equalities Improvement Action Plan. A number of actions in relation to procurement have had timescales pushed back to reflect a number of staffing changes within the procurement section. However the Performance and Service Improvement Manager is meeting with the newly appointed Head of Procurement to ensure that actions are implemented in accordance with revised timescales.
3. There is only one action where the status is red this is in relation to obtaining equality profiling of members. Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee are asked to consider what might be the best approach to obtain this information.

Equality Framework for Local Government – Excellent Criteria

4. The EFLG helps an organisation demonstrate to its service users and the wider community that equality is fully embedded in everything it does and the services it delivers in particular for those with protected characteristics. These are individuals who

are protected by the Equality Act 2010 in that they can not be treated unfairly or discriminated against, harassed or victimised because they have one or more protected characteristic. In York those with protected characteristics are known as Community of Identity which covers :

- Age
- Disability – physical and mental impairment
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Carers
- People living in York's most deprived areas

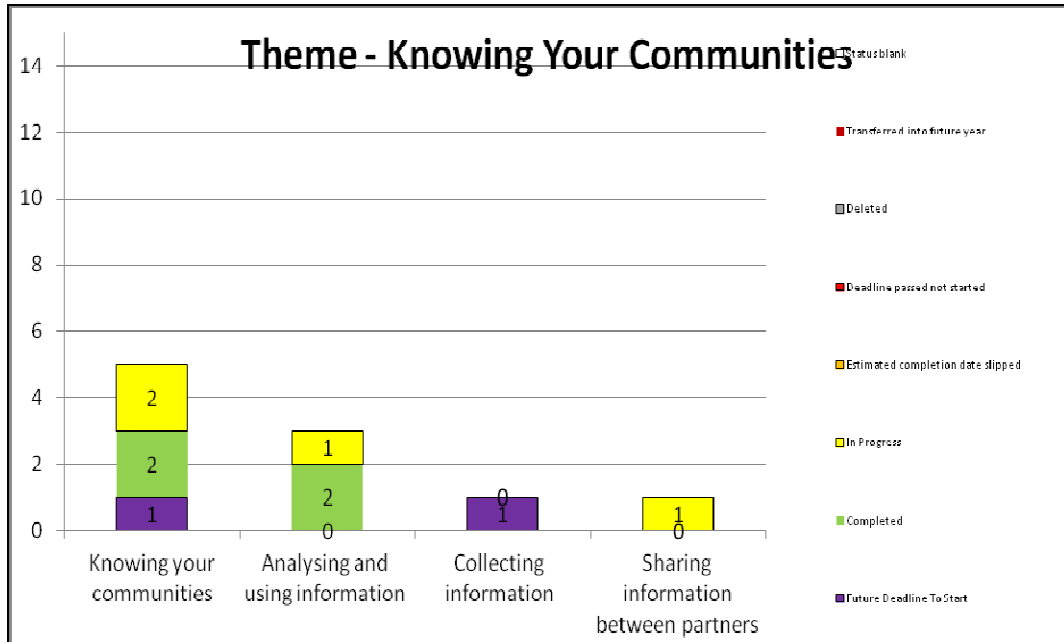
5. The EFLG covers five performance areas:
 - a. Knowing your communities
 - b. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
 - c. Community engagement and satisfaction
 - d. Responsive services and customer care
 - e. A skilled and committed workforce

Knowing Your Communities

6. Knowing your communities includes three main elements :
 - a. Collecting Information
 - b. Analysing and using Information
 - c. Sharing Information between partners
7. In terms of reaching Excellence assessors will want to establish that CYC base its policies, procedures and other actions on sound evidence and research around the needs of the community. Assessors will be looking for good quality analysis in key areas of life such as health, education, community safety, housing quality, access to work and so on. They will be looking

to see that CYC have identified where the outcomes and opportunities gaps are for different communities, including those sharing the protected characteristics .These gaps and opportunities form the basis of identifying local priorities and provide the evidence base both for decisions about service policy and delivery and for monitoring the effects of these decisions on local communities. Assessors will focus on whether:

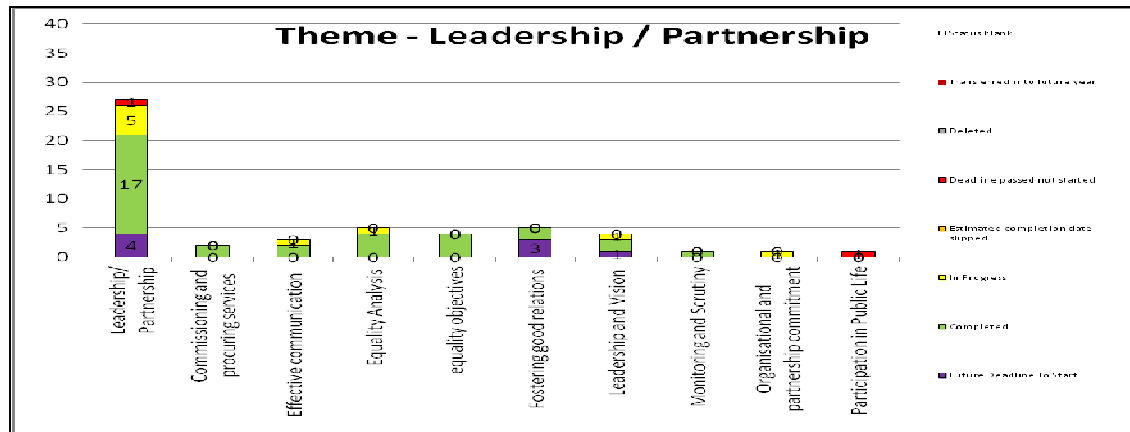
- a. The authority has good quality information on the equality profile of its communities and their changing needs, which is regularly updated and used to inform planning and monitor outcomes.
 - b. Equality objectives and outcomes are reviewed and evaluated regularly, corporately and at service level based on updated equality data.
 - c. Partners are able to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities and service planning
8. The Equalities Excellence Improvement Action Plan identified 5 actions to improve performance in this area. Actions included establishing monitoring arrangements for equalities objectives and priorities and ensuring service plans include equalities priorities. These actions have been completed. A Case Study demonstrating how the council and its partners are developing a more cohesive community and ongoing monitoring of take up targets are in progress. Work to develop a further case study demonstrating which groups have taken up services as a result of targeted action is yet to start. The graph below shows the progress status for actions.



Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

9. Strategic leadership – both political and managerial is key to establishing a strong vision for equality and improving equality outcomes. Local councillors in particular have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.
10. The EFLG framework emphasises the importance of working in partnership with local partners and the voluntary and community sector. Vision and partnership needs to be backed up by organisational commitment. The equality framework looks for evidence of this in terms of resource allocation, compliance with public duties, democratic engagement, scrutiny, service planning and procurement. Assessors will be examining whether:
 - a. There is a coherent, shared vision of equality for the local area, with clear priorities which have been agreed and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector
 - b. The authority can demonstrate success in working with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to meet a range of equality objectives, which are reviewed on a regular basis

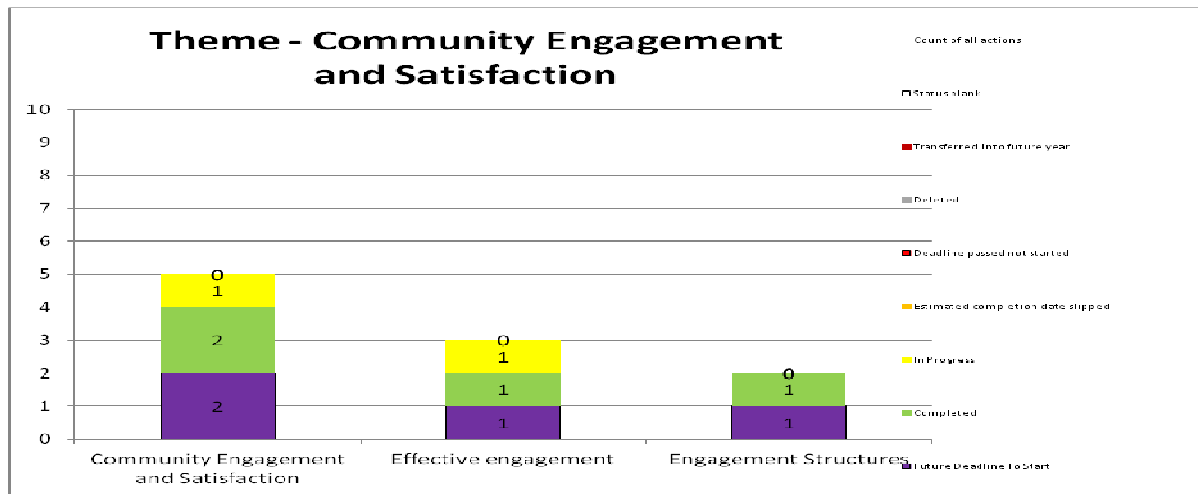
- c. The authority can demonstrate that action has been taken and improvements in equality outcomes are being delivered as a result of effective equality analysis.
 - d. The authority can demonstrate a clear link between meeting their equality objectives and positive outcomes for its communities
 - e. The authority benchmarks its achievements against comparable others and shares its experience in developing good practice across the public sector
 - f. Through effective and consistent communications the authority has gained a reputation within the community and with its strategic and voluntary and community sector partners for championing and achieving equality outcomes, balancing competing interests and fostering good relations.
 - g. The authority has a consistent corporate approach to commissioning and procurement and can demonstrate that commissioned / procured services are supporting its equality objectives.
 - h. There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in public roles and volunteering.
 - i. Local people are positive about relations across diverse communities and have confidence that harassment and hate crimes are dealt with effectively.
 - j. The authority can demonstrate success in working with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to foster good relations.
11. To improve performance 27 improvement actions were identified. The majority of actions 17 have been completed these include reflecting the Fairness Commission's recommendations into a newly refreshed Single Equality Scheme ,reviewing equalities governance arrangements and developing a Hate Crime Strategy. However there is one action where status is red. This is because we are unaware of the equalities profile of members.



Community Engagement and Satisfaction

12. The important thing with community engagement is ensuring that the views of a wide cross-section of people who live and work in an area are obtained. This means finding ways to facilitate the participation of all local people, including the vulnerable and marginalised, through working effectively across agencies and with partners. Community engagement and satisfaction comprises two main elements:
 - a. Engagement structures
 - b. Effective engagement
13. Assessors will be examining whether:
 - a. Effective forums are in place to enable all equality stakeholders / representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups to challenge and scrutinise decision-making and progress
 - b. Key sections of the community are satisfied that the authority and its partners have listened to them and taken their views into account.
14. The graph overleaf outlines that there were 5 improvement actions for this performance area. Completed actions include identifying where those who share protected characteristics reside in York and reviewing how Community Impact Assessments (formerly known as Equality Impact Assessments) are undertaken. The action to review how the Equality Advisory Group examine community contracts is in progress. The two actions still to start relate to writing two case studies demonstrating how EAG has involved a diverse range of people

who have influenced service delivery and how members have been involved in consultation and engagement sessions.



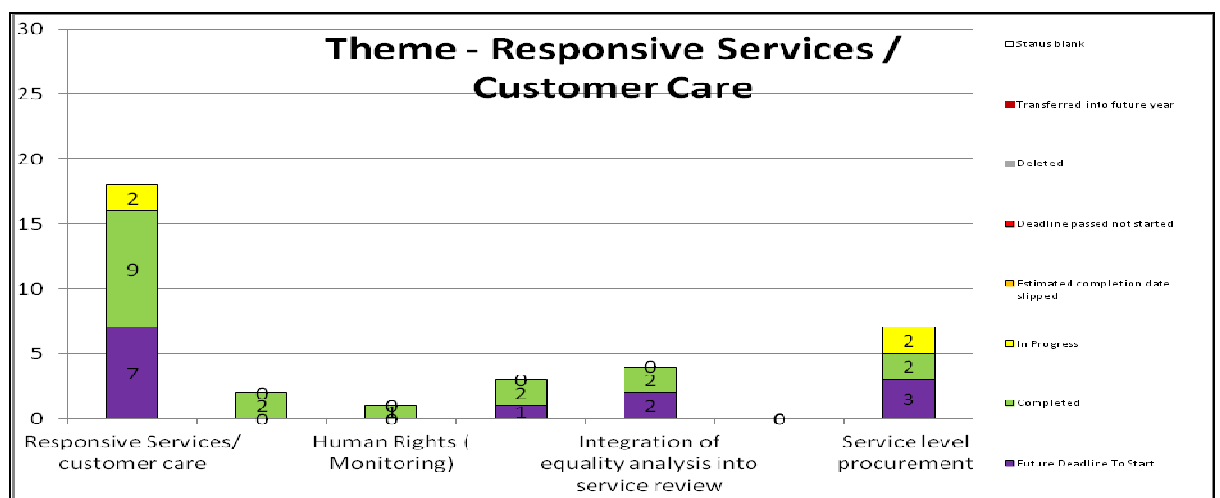
Responsive Services and Customer Care

15. Councils' must meet the needs of a diverse range of local communities and individuals. Providers need to have a strong understanding of their local area in order to design services that meet need and are able to respond to change. Efficient use of money is dependent on being able to target resources to where they will be most effective, for example in meeting the needs of vulnerable people and delivering good quality outcomes. Responsive services and customer care under the framework comprises five main elements :
 - a. Integration of equality analysis into service review
 - b. Integration into service planning and delivery
 - c. Service level procurement
 - d. Access to services
 - e. Human rights.

16. Assessors will be considering whether:
 - a. Policy and decision-making is informed by equality analysis. The cumulative impact of decisions is understood and monitored across the authority and partnerships.

- b. Individual services across the authority can demonstrate that improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered.
- c. The authority is able to show improved outcomes and improving satisfaction with and perceptions of procured services from all sections of the community, without large discrepancies between groups.
- d. There is increased satisfaction with services amongst all users, including vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- e. People believe that they have been treated fairly and that their human rights have been respected.

17. The graph below highlights that 18 improvement actions were identified for this theme. Completed actions include the production of a Procurement Strategy, changing questionnaires to include equality questions and setting up mechanisms to analyse customer surveys to reflect feedback from people with one or more protected characteristics. An action currently in progress is piloting revised equality training for staff and writing a procurement case study. There are seven actions which are still to start. These actions relate to procurement and the original deadlines have been put back to reflect staffing changes within this section. The Performance and Service Improvement Manager is to meet with the newly appointed Procurement Manager to ensure that these actions will be completed within the revised timescales.

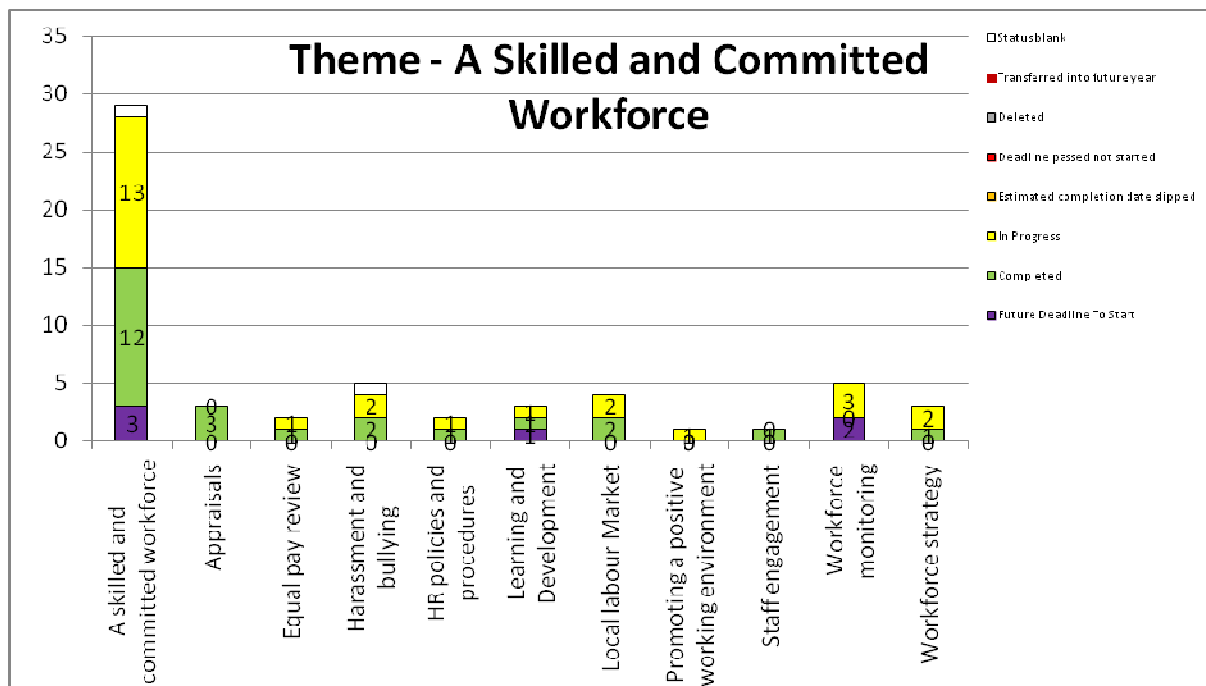


A Skilled and Committed Workforce

18. As part of their work to promote equality and diversity, local authorities need to ensure that they reflect these aspirations in their role as an employer as well as in their role as a service provider. This means that not only should all their human resources (HR) policies and procedures reflect good practice in equality and diversity, but also that anyone who applies to the organisation or who works for it feels confident that they are treated fairly. 'A modern and diverse workforce' comprises nine main elements within the framework:
 - a. Workforce strategy
 - b. The local labour market
 - c. Workforce monitoring
 - d. HR policies and procedures
 - e. Staff engagement
 - f. Promoting a positive working environment
 - g. Equal pay review
 - h. Harassment and bullying
 - i. Appraisal
 - j. Learning and development.

19. When examining this performance area Assessors will be looking to establish whether:
 - a. Prioritised equality outcomes for the whole workforce are being achieved through the collective impact of a range of processes
 - b. The authority can demonstrate movement towards greater equality in its workforce profile, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation
 - c. Action is taken to address any adverse trends identified from the monitoring and analysis of employment data.

- d. A range of examples is readily available of positive outcomes from mitigation action and action to promote equality of opportunity.
 - e. The authority has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups.
 - f. There are high satisfaction levels with the working environment across all staff groups
 - g. Action is underway to ensure equal pay is fully implemented
 - h. Harassment and bullying at work are dealt with effectively and more staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect. Staff are confident that there are robust procedures in place to address harassment and bullying at work.
 - i. Managers and staff are delivering improvements based on objectives
 - j. Councillors understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities.
20. There are 28 improvement actions for a skilled and committed workforce. Of these 12 have been completed, 13 are in progress and 3 have yet to start. Completed actions include development of a competency assessment for staff which embeds equalities, a dignity at work policy to deal with harassment and bullying, completion of an equal pay audit, all job descriptions are job evaluated, a review of flexible working has been completed and new flexible working arrangements are being implemented.
21. A number of actions in progress are in relation to implementing a training programme on the Dignity at Work policy, monitoring improvement in relation to harassment and bullying, increasing the diversity of apprenticeships and the workforce. Actions yet to start are in relation to implementation of iTrent the new HR system and developing an approach to succession planning within the council.



Consultation

22. As this is a progress report on implementation of the Action Plan no consultation has been undertaken.

Council Plan

23. These proposals relate to the Council's corporate priorities of building strong communities and protecting vulnerable people, as set out in the Council's Plan 2011-15.

Implications

24. As a progress report there are no implications as this stage

Recommendations

25. This report has outlined what Assessors will be looking for when assessing against the Equalities Framework for Local Government Excellence criteria. In addition progress against the Excellence in Equalities Improvement Action plan has also been summarised. The Scrutiny Committee are requested to note progress and discuss how members might be encouraged to complete equality profiling information.

Reason: To help the authority to achieve excellence for the Equality Framework for Local Government.

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Report
Approved

Date 28 August 2013

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*

Implication ie Financial

Implication ie Legal

Name

Name

Title

Title

Tel No.

Tel No.

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Appendix 1 – Excellence for the Equality Framework for Local
Government

Appendix 2 - Status for each Improvement Action