

Report for Information

Report to Scrutiny
11 December 2008

Report of Director of Transformation

Subject Achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard – progress report

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Purpose

To update the committee on Norwich City Council's progress towards achieving Level 2 of the Equalities Standard.

Recommendations

To note the report

Financial Consequences

Achieving Level 2 of the Equalities Standard is one of the priority projects in the Corporate Plan 2008-10, and implementation will therefore be met from existing resources. However there may be ongoing training costs associated with improving skills and awareness amongst existing staff, and new starters. Achieving Level 3 (and beyond) will require careful planning, and implementation may well require additional resources.

Risk assessment

The publication of impact assessments, along with annual reporting of progress on action plans, is a statutory duty.

There is a risk associated with loss of reputation and the possibility that services are not being delivered in an equitable manner.

We are under the scrutiny of other authorities and advocacy agencies, as well as the equality and human rights commission.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Opportunities for all – communities to be able to access the wide range of services in the city provided by the Council" and the service plan priority to achieve Level 2 of the Equalities' Standard.

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Background Documents

(A) Current Equality Standard – delivery and evidence plan:

<\\Sfil2\Shared Folders\Management\Equality & diversity\Equality Standard\Project Plan\NCC Equalities Framework.xls>

(B) Revised Equality Standard – proposal for national change in 2009:

<\\Sfil2\Shared Folders\Management\Equality & diversity\Equality Standard\Revised Equality Standard 2008\Revised Equality Standard.xls>

Report

Background to the Equalities Standard Framework

1. The Equalities Standard is a framework for public authorities to measure their progress regarding the statutory equalities duties laid out in legislation on Race (2000), Disability (2005) and Gender (2006).
2. There are currently 5 levels, 1 being the lowest. The majority of Level 5 public authorities are based in London. Many authorities are at Level 3 which involves an external peer assessment (such as Norfolk County Council). Norwich City Council is currently at Level 1, which is lower than most of our peer authorities at Level 2.
3. In April 2009, a new streamlined framework will be introduced, with three rather than five levels (Appendix B) in keeping with the introduction of new equalities legislation (the Single Equalities Act) and the CAA framework, most likely resulting in a broader assessment of services.

Actions required to achieve Level 2

4. As Level 2 is a corporate priority project, the Council has developed a detailed checklist (Appendix A), which we are working against within the council. In brief, the key areas that Level 2 success depends on are customer care, engagement and accountability, leadership and employment. This translates into strengthened procedures in procurement and partnerships, transparency and highly evolved development of engagement and consultation mechanisms, proactive engagement as an employer, and leadership from the top.
5. There is a statutory duty to demonstrate commitment to equality of opportunity through the publication of three equality schemes, with an annual review of their action plans. In addition, impact assessments must be completed across the organisation with resulting equalities objectives on an individual service area and corporate level. In order to do this effectively there needs to be a strengthening of data monitoring and consultation processes, and effective training on carrying out the assessments, as well as the impetus to prioritise the process.

Update on activities so far

6. It is fair to say that in the past the City Council has not put enough emphasis on equalities. However, in the last 2 years there has been increased attention, and this has resulted in adoption of a range of corporate equality and diversity policies, identification of resource within the Policy and Improvement Team to drive improvement across all council services, and increased training provision.
7. In order to demonstrate clear senior leadership, we have established a sponsorship equalities group chaired by the Chief Executive, and a project team which reports to a sponsorship equalities group made up of a range of

staff from across the organisation.

8. As a result of this there have been a number of significant improvements in recent months including:
 - A range of service Impact Assessments have now been put into place, and the Impact Assessment toolkit has been redrafted
 - Diversity monitoring of customer contacts has been standardised from October 2008 with regular reports expected to run by December 2008.
 - The development of a consultation strategy will also support the impact assessment process
 - The procurement and contracts process has been reviewed, and a rolling programme of contract checking will commence as a result of the review
 - The website page has been updated and the race equality and gender equality schemes are now out of draft form
 - The disability equality scheme will be refreshed with a focus on effective consultation. So far we have had an internal consultation with disabled staff, and have commissioned external consultation in conjunction with the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People which is due in February 2009.

What is still outstanding

9. Whilst good progress is now being made, there are a number of key steps still required in order to ensure achievement of Level 2 by March 2009. These include:
 - The roll out of training on Diversity Awareness for frontline staff and training on impact assessments for service managers
 - The completion of initial service screenings and full impact assessments, where needed, so that equalities objectives are included in service plans
 - The framework for monitoring of contracts has yet to be set up
 - The sustainable community strategy and community engagement strategy must be reviewed in order to ensure equalities are embedded
 - The disability equality scheme needs to be completed once the consultation is complete.

Conclusion

10. Norwich City Council is now progressing its equalities work well, and we are confident of achieving Level 2 by March 2009. This will put us at a comparable level with most District Councils.
11. Embedding equalities in the corporate framework requires organisational and cultural changes, both of which take time. A vital element will be the active involvement of the Heads of Service driving equalities service improvement measures and ensuring impact assessments are completed.
12. In due course the City Council will need to consider what activities are needed to reach Level 3, what timetable this will require, and what

additional resources will be needed. Ultimately implementation planning may well need to be picked up as part of the preparations for unitary government, which is likely to come into place from 1 April 2010.

Leadership and Corporate Commitment	completed	Evidence	To do	Who by?	When by?
2.1.1 Publish draft Corporate Equality Scheme to deliver the authority's Comprehensive Equality Policy and statutory equality schemes	yes	RES - completed and ready to publish GES - completed and ready to publish. Staff disability equality forum consultation undertaken.	DES - awaiting consultation in Feb 09 - ready for April 09. Monitoring action plans for schemes and diversity strategy.	Policy Officer Heads of service	April 09 Dec 08
2.1.2 Produce a risk assessment of local authority services, activities and procedures and develop a prioritised programme of equality impact	Yes	Stage 1 Test of Relevances undertaken with three year time table. Stage 2 Initial screenings begun. Stage 3 Full impact assessments.	Collate all of the tests of relevance. Identify priorities and create three year time table. Review initial screenings and full assessments as they are undertaken.	Policy Officer Sponsorship Group	Nov-08
2.1.3 Publish an action plan for the extension of equality impact assessment to sexual orientation, religion or belief and age by March 2008	Yes	Already included in DIA	Already in place	N/A	N/A
2.1.4 Demonstrate corporate engagement in the equality impact assessment process	No	DIA training undertaken in November 2007 and January 2008. Diversity Champions identified amongst teams. Test for Relevance and Initial Screenings reviewed across departments.	Three year timetable. Sponsorship equalities group to quality control and review screenings. Reporting mechanism clarified. Publish any EIAs that have been completed (so far none completed).	Sponsorship Group & Project team	Ongoing
2.1.5 Develop a corporate mechanism for assessing the development of service level equality objectives and targets	No	Service Plan Equality Objectives	Include objectives in departmental service plans. Ensure data is consistent and comprehensive between departments. Put quality control mechanisms in place. Include objectives in annual report	Sponsorship Group & project team	annually
2.1.6 Create a corporate structure for overseeing development of information and monitoring systems	Yes	Diversity Monitoring reports run centrally by the Service Improvement team with generic and specific data reports available. First generic reports due in December.	Embed the new monitoring systems in customer care. Ensure data capture is not limited to one software programme but corporate. Ownership of reports to be established.	Project Team (Service Improvement Team)	Sept/Oct 08
2.1.7 Develop a corporate framework for equality consultation and guidance on consultation methods to be adopted within the authority	No	Statement of community involvement (planning dept), Local Strategic Partnership and Norfolk Compact. Corporate Consultation Strategy and toolkit drafted. Consultation working group responsible for overseeing consultations. New community engagement strategy also drafted as part of overall involvement strategy.	Develop consultation and engagement strategy across whole organisation. Provide guidance on methodologies of engagement and consultation through workshops/training etc.	Consultation working group.	Oct-08
Community Engagement and Accountability		Evidence	To do		When by?
2.2.1 Ensure that draft Corporate Equality Scheme has been circulated to designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with consultation timetable and is published in an appropriate range of languages and formats	No	Copy of corporate diversity strategy and action plans distributed and accessible via website.	Produce an easy read summary of the documents. Ensure it is more widely available as appropriate. Consultation working party to develop timetable	Project Team, Consultation working group.	Dec-08

Level 2 Work Plan Review

2.2.2 Review equality content of all community strategies (LAAs etc)	No	Norfolk Local Area Agreement include an initial equality impact assessment and checklist, and is carrying out consultations for refreshes. Need to ensure that community engagement, sustainable communities and consultation strategies all include equality objectives, visions and goals.	Sustainable communities strategy review and community engagement strategy development to include equalities through objectives, vision and aims.	Partnerships team, community engagement team.	
2.2.3 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and the wider community on corporate policy	No	Community Engagement Strategy, Consultation Strategy and strengthening partnerships (with third sector/established partnerships such as LSP's)	Corporate consistency in approach to engagement and consultation. Individual service areas to identify key stakeholders and gaps in process. Ensure information is widely accessible. Ensure mechanisms are in place for feedback.	Partnerships team, community engagement team. All teams	Ongoing
2.2.4 Involve members, employee representatives, department and service managers on impact assessments and all aspects of the Corporate Equality Scheme/Comprehensive Diversity Strategy	No	Consultation strategy and toolkit in development. Diversity Champions identified. Trade union involvement in consultation and development process as appropriate. Race Equality Council approached to scrutinise impact assessments.	Highlight CES throughout corporation. Trade union and other representatives involved in full impact assessments regarding HR & Learning. Strengthen diversity champions network. Each service areas to ensure key stakeholders identified at initial screening are allowed opportunity to participate in assessment.	Project Team, sponsorship group and various	Ongoing
2.2.5 Each department and service area to involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its equality impact assessments and its service delivery	No	Consultation strategy and toolkit in development. Diversity Champions identified.	Develop a consultation and engagement strategy. Involve stakeholders in DIA's. (Not all service areas have to be <u>fully</u> impact assessed.). Consultation toolkit planned.	Project Team and various	Ongoing
2.2.6 Each department and service area to engage community stakeholders through scrutiny of service delivery	No	Engage service users to examine current service provision.	Engage service users to examine current service provision.	Service Teams	ongoing
2.2.7 Seek to ensure that the corporate equality policy and objectives are incorporated in partnership and contractual arrangements engaged in by the authority	Yes	Procurement: Review and refresh of major corporate contracts due for completion by 2010. Rolling programme of quarterly reviews. Tender documents, plans and strategies reviewed, and impact assessment of procedures.	Monitoring contracts regarding equalities objectives. Partnerships: Impact assessment of sustainable community strategy, inclusion of assessment toolkit in governance framework.	Procurement & Partnerships Teams	2010
Service Delivery and Customer Care		Evidence			When by?
2.3.1 Complete prioritised department and service area impact assessments as a basis for the development of equality objectives and targets	No	Tests of relevance begun, timetable of assessments to be devised in December.	Undertake prioritised Impact Assessments across departments. Complete initial screenings already started across the organisation. Timetable Assessments.	All service areas	Dec-08
2.3.2 Begin development of department and service area equality objectives and targets	No	None yet	Include equality objective targets in service plans having identified them through EIA's, customer service feedback general customer service aims.	All service areas	ongoing

Level 2 Work Plan Review

2.3.3 Review of services should include the procurement function and all contracted services and partnership arrangements	Yes	Review and refresh of major corporate contracts due for completion by 2010. Rolling programme of quarterly reviews. Tender documents, plans and strategies reviewed, and impact assessment of procedures.	Monitoring contracts regarding equalities objectives. Partnerships Governance Framework to include equalities checklist and toolkit.	Procurement	2010
2.3.4 Each department and service area to establish planning groups for monitoring and information systems	No	Corporate Monitoring	Reviewing the monitoring and <u>analysis</u> of data regularly.	All service areas	Ongoing
2.3.5 Each department and service area to engage with equality self-assessment and scrutiny on its service delivery	No	Service Plan Equality Objectives are reviewed. Corporate Equality, Race, gender and disability equality scheme action points reviewed.	Objectives for each service area to be reviewed and reported on by each Head of Service. Mechanism for reporting and reviewing progress to be agreed.	sponsorship equalities group, DMT's and SMT's.	Ongoing
Employment and Training		Evidence	To do		When by?
2.4.1 Develop and adopt fair employment and equal pay policy	Yes	Single Status	Results of single status review	HR	Apr-09
2.4.2 Engage in employment equality assessment of the local labour market	No	Statutory monitoring requirement - reflecting the general make up of the workforce.	Local labour market analysis, workforce analysis, assessment.	HR	
2.4.3 Engage in an equal pay review	Yes	Single Status	Results of single status review	HR	Apr-09
2.4.4 Adopt a Local Government Workforce Strategy	Yes	People strategy currently up to 2008	Workforce plan for 2009.	HR	Apr-10
2.4.5 Adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants	Yes	Diverse advertising currently in place. Recruitment fairs in the community.	Impact assessment of recruitment policy and functions.	HR	Ongoing
2.4.6 Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit	Yes	Review to be undertaken with Single Status.	Already in place	HR	Ongoing
2.4.7 Review personnel information system for monitoring suitability including supporting the council's statutory monitoring duties	Yes	Staff Survey and Personnel Records. No monitoring of Sexual Orientation or Religion/Belief	Monitoring through recruitment and staff surveys, information disseminated for equality purposes.	HR	Ongoing
2.4.8 Develop a programme of equality training to support the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental service objectives	Yes	Online Training Package to be rolled out across teams. New training plan with 4 tiers of knowledge requirements.	Roll out online training in December Visit potential external deliverer of training in December. Roll out diversity awareness training for frontline staff in Jan Roll out diversity impact assessment training for service managers and diversity champions in Jan.	HR	Jan-09
2.4.9 Ensure that the training programme is consistent with the training arrangements in the council's statutory equality schemes	Yes	See above	See above	HR	
2.4.10 Make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and employment Codes of Practice	Yes	On going practice	Ongoing process	HR	Ongoing

Achieving				in place & effective	In place but needs improving	currently being established	not in place
Knowing your community - Equality Mapping	How was this done? What is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4
21. Relevant and appropriate information is gathered using a range of techniques across all equality target groups; to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise							
2.2 Information & data is shared appropriately and as necessary across the authority and with partners in order to achieve equality outcomes.							
2.3 Relevant and appropriate information and data is mapped disaggregated and used to assess equality objectives.							
2.4 It is able to identify how their communities are changing and the impact this may have on service priorities.							
Place shaping, Leadership, Partnership and organisational commitment	How was this done? What is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4
2.5 Clear organisational and partnership equality priorities have been set and are owned and understood by all key stakeholders including the third sector.							
2.6 Equality objectives and actions can be found in corporate and strategic plans.							
2.7 Equality and cohesion priorities and objectives are monitored regularly by the political leadership and senior management teams.							
2.8 It has allocated appropriate resources to achieve objectives.							
2.9 It publishes the outcomes of EIA's on a regular basis.							
2.10 Overview and scrutiny processes address equality issues.							
2.11 Work is being undertaken to promote equality of opportunity in terms of participation as elected representatives.							

Community Engagement and Satisfaction		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4
2.12 Local Public service priorities have been set alongside national ones which involve local people and their identified needs.							
2.13 Consultation with stakeholders and the third sector is systematically built into EIA's, the self assessment and planning process							
Responsive services and customer care		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4
2.14 A set of equality objectives/outcomes has been produced at service/unit level to meet the needs of identified equality target groups							
2.15 Equality Objectives have been developed within each department/service area based on completed impact assessments and other equality data							
2.16 Structures have been established at service/unit level to progress and monitor performance. Equality and cohesion objectives are monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams							
2.17 Appropriate resources have been allocated to achieve objectives							
2.18 Mechanisms are in place to ensure that equality objectives are delivered by contractors through contract management and that they are monitored properly							
2.19 The authority ensures that contractors commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible							
Modern, diverse and reflective workforce		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4
2.20 Workforce strategies address equality issues							

2.21 The authority has made significant progress on the equal pay review and reaching agreement with the unions							
2.22 It delivers a range of learning and development interventions to support members and officers to deliver equality outcomes.							
2.23 Employment objectives have been set based on internal monitoring information, the assessment of the local labour market and barriers	0						
2.24 Advser trends resulting from the monitoring of employment data is acted upon							
2.25 Equality implications of objectives in management and inidividual appraisals have been considered							
2.26 All employment procedures have been impact assessed.							

Emerging					in place & effective	In place but needs improving	currently being established	not in place
		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?						
Knowing your community - Equality Mapping	How was this done? What is the evidence?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4		
1.1 It has plans in place to undertake comprehensive equality mapping across the authority								
1.2 Local People's needs and equality issues are mapped out across the organisation.								
1.3 It is developing systems corporately and at service/nuit level to collect data and intelligence about the community and their needs and aspirations								
1.4 It analyses data to ensure appropriate and relevant objectives will be set.								
		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?						
Place shaping, Leadership, Partnership and organisational commitment	How was this done? What is the evidence?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4		
1.5 Leader, Chief Executive, and partners commit publicly to improve equality outcomes for their community								
1.6 A corporate prioritised programme of EIA's is in place								
1.7 It has corporate equality schemes in place								
1.8 It is carrying out EIAs across the authority in a consistent way								
1.9 It has allocated resources to deliver this agenda								
1.10 Corporate and service level structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of the equalities agenda								
1.11 It integrates equalities issues into its internal and external communications strategy.								
1.12 Authority and its partners are committed to promote equality through contracts, commissioning and grant aid.								
		What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?						
Community Engagement and Satisfaction	How was this done? What is the evidence?	What difference will this make?	1	2	3	4		
1.13 It consults before equality priorities are agreed. Feedback is given to those consulted, both on the results of consultation and the action that will be taken.								

1.27 It monitors and publishes employment data to fulfil its statutory duties							
1.28 It ensure that all employment procedures comply with equalities legislation and employment codes of practice.							
1.29 Harrassment and bullying at work is dealt with effectively.							