

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

4 July 2016

### Annual Equalities Report for 2015/2016

#### Report of Director – Strategy and Commissioning

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To review the performance of the Equalities Annual Work Programme and to agree the planned work programme following the Achieving Standard under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider the evidence and information contained within this report.
- 1.2 To agree the equalities action plan for 2016/17 noting the areas of good practice upon which it builds and the areas for development that it addresses.
- 1.3 To agree the 3 year rolling plan of Equality Impact Assessments.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report presents Cherwell District Council's equalities annual performance, refreshed Action Plan and three year rolling Equality Impact Assessment Plan. The Equality Scorecard performance report sets out the organisation's strengths and areas for development which forms part of the Council's approach to equalities which seeks to ensure excellent customer service, fair access to local services and support to vulnerable people is part of all we do.
- 2.2 Executive first reviewed an equalities assessment during 2010/2011 and took the decision not to go for an external peer assessment. However, the Council remains committed to equalities and reports its performance on a quarterly basis against its equalities plan, via equality impact assessments and annual reporting to Executive.

#### 3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Equality Performance Scorecards are prepared by the Corporate Policy Officer.

- 3.2 Executive is asked to ensure that the general approach taken to equalities is relevant and meets the Council's wider objectives.
- 3.2 A summary of equalities strengths and areas for development is included in the table below:

<b>Equalities and Customer Access</b>	
<b>Performance Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Development</b>
<p><b>Brighter Futures -</b></p> <p>During 2015/16 Brighter Futures created new priorities established around child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable and to implement a new workshop approach.</p> <p>During this year 2 workshops have taken place, Health Improvement and Inequalities and employability, focusing on educational attainment, skills development, job readiness and local market relevance.</p> <p>Both workshops were well attended and productive in relation to a new multi-agency activity.</p>	<p><b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement Strategy -</b></p> <p>With the Corporate Equality Action Plan for 2015/2016 was an objective for a refreshed Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy to be produced and agreed by Members.</p> <p>The Strategy has been reviewed and produced during this time period but has not been signed off or adopted by members.</p> <p>The strategy is on the Councils Forward Plan for review at the July 2016 Executive.</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding – Knowing your Community – Corporate Intelligence</b></p> <p>Cherwell staff and Members have received a variety of briefings this year linked to topics that can affect the vulnerable with the purpose of raising our awareness and the duties attached the Local Authority; Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and the Prevent agenda.</p> <p>In line with Safeguarding recommendations, the Council has implemented 'See it, Report it Corporate Intelligence which has been live since August 2015. This corporate procedure allows all staff to safely report intelligence/concerns they may witness in the local community whilst completing their daily role for the authority. This information is then shared with our relevant partners. Since implementation</p>	<p><b>Fair &amp; Aware Training-</b></p> <p>Historically Fair and Aware Training was seen as strength for Cherwell District Council, but the internal modular training approach is no longer delivered.</p> <p>New employees continue to have access to the e-learning website equality module (which is more of an introduction). This module must be completed during their probationary period.</p> <p>Two years ago when the decision was made to cease the modular training all staff underwent ½ day equality training. This has not happened during 2015/2016.</p> <p>The Corporate Policy Officer will engage with the Learning &amp; Development Business Partner to evaluate and ensure</p>

<p>the Council has provided 40 instances of intelligence to our partners. This is more than expected, demonstrating that staff are confident in reporting via the SIRI process.</p> <p>All staff will have safeguarding training needs assessed in 2016/17 and receive appropriate training.</p>	<p>all new staff since 2015 have undergone equality training.</p>
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3.3 The Council aims to ensure its approach to equalities is meaningful and locally relevant. Its work draws on the findings of the Equality Scorecards and is pulled together into a single action plan. The refreshed action plan for 2016/17 is attached as appendix 1. It is grounded in a clear understanding of the district and the corporate equality plan is based on five objectives, each supported by a number of local priorities.

**1. Fair Access and Customer Satisfaction**

- To ensure Cherwell District Council and our Partners treat the public fairly regardless of their background or way of life
- To improve our services to the older generation within the Cherwell district
- To ensure all our services both internal and external are accessible to all Equality Groups at a high standard

**2. Tackling Inequality and Deprivation**

- To break the cycle of deprivation within the district (Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme)

**3. Building Strong and Cohesive Communities**

- Promote integration between communities and groups through the use of sport, leisure, cultural activities and opportunities for community involvement

**4. Positive Engagement and Understanding**

- To continue to increase engagement and work with young people within the district
- Increase Cherwell's knowledge and understanding of the wider community to ensure we fulfil all residents' needs within our services
- Raise internal awareness of diversity within our community

**5. Demonstrating Our Commitment to Equality**

- Review and publicise all documentation in line with the government framework
- Review achieving standard to research and develop the improvement programme
- Ensure staff and services promote and embed equality into their work
- All EIAs and Equality documents to be reviewed by the Corporate Equality and Diversity Steering Group

3.4 In addition to the annual report and the equalities action plan the Council also has a rolling plan of equality impact assessments. These assessments are undertaken when policies or services are subject to change that may have an impact on one or more groups of service users. The Council is keen to ensure it understands the impact of any changes and that no specific groups are disadvantaged. To support the process of impact assessment the Council consults with stakeholders including the voluntary sector.

3.5 No critical impacts were raised as a result of EIAs in 2015/16.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 Cherwell District Council has made significant progress delivering against the equalities agenda in recent years and has continued to maintain this during 2015/2016 whilst continuing to adopt a proportionate approach to equality performance with meaningful and relevant Corporate Action Plans to support this work.

4.2 The updated action plan demonstrates how the Council will continue to deliver its equalities objectives over the coming year. Progress will be reported via the performance management framework on a quarterly basis.

4.3 The three year impact assessment rolling plan also provides assurance that the Council is mindful of policy change and seeks to understand and address the impacts of service and policy change where appropriate.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 No specific consultation on this report is required.

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items within this report

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement - 01295 221551

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### **Legal Implications**

7.2 The Council is legally obliged to comply with the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 legislation.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance – 0300 0030107

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## Risk Implications

- 7.3 'Failure to comply with equalities legislation' is classified as a corporate risk and is therefore reported regularly as part of the Council's risk management framework. Controls in place and recent activity are assessed as part of this process.

Comments checked by:

Ed Bailey Corporate Performance Manager - 01295 221605  
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## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met: No**

**Community Impact Threshold Met: No**

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Corporate Plan and Equality Framework for local Government

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood  
Leader of the Council

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Corporate Equality Action Plan 2015 - 2018
Appendix 2	Equality Impact Assessment 3 Year Rolling Plan
Appendix 3	Equality Scorecard Reports
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
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