

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Annual Equalities Report 2016/2017

Report of Assistant Director – Commercial Development & Innovation

6 June 2016

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 2017/18 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The 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 equality plan, via equality impact assessments and annual reporting to Executive.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Equality Performance Scorecards are prepared by the Business Transformation Project 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:

Equalities and Customer Access	
Performance Strengths	Areas for Development
<p>Brighter Futures</p> <p>During 2016/17 Brighter Futures held workshop events related to the programmes core priorities established around child poverty, and employability.</p> <p>The workshops focused on issues such as child poverty, educational attainment and readiness for the workplace.</p> <p>The recent report of the Oxfordshire Health Inequalities Commission supports the place and multi-agency approach adopted by the Brighter Future programme.</p>	<p>Joint Corporate Translation Policy</p> <p>During 2016/2017 the Council received a handful of discrimination related corporate complaints linked to receiving documentation from the council in an accessible format which upon investigation were deemed valid complaints.</p> <p>The Council operates a translation documents which provides guidance to all employees when needing to provide documentation in an alternative format.</p> <p>Although requests are few and far between this has been raised as a potential area for development whereby the Business Transformation Project Officer and members of the Equality E-Steering with review current practices and create an updated translation support document for both Cherwell and South North ant's employees.</p>
<p>Building Strong Communities</p> <p>This year there has been a variety of projects undertaken with an emphasis to 'wellbeing' across all age groups.</p> <p>These have included 'Singing for Health'; 'Social Prescribing' which is specifically aimed at older isolated residents has resulted in an average 20% reduction in GP visits during its pilot.</p>	<p>Fair & Aware Training-</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>2017/2018 will see the potential for 'Social Prescribing' scheme to be rolled out to more local practices.</p>	<p>Three years ago when the decision was made to cease the modular training all staff underwent ½ day equality training. The Business Transformation Project Officer will engage with the Learning & Development Business Partner to evaluate and ensure all new staff since 2015 has 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 quarterly Equality Scorecards (please note, due to system improvements being built within the Councils Performance Matters during Quarter 1 2016/2017, there is no Q1 Equality Scorecard) and is pulled together into a single action plan.

The refreshed action plan for 2017/18 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 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 2016/17.

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 2016/2017 whilst continuing to adopt a locally relevant 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, Chief Finance Officer, 01295 221551
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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: Louise Tustian, Performance Team Leader, 01295 221605
Louise.tustian@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Caroline French, Business Transformation Project Officer
Contact Information	01295 221586 Caroline.french@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk