

Report of the Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday 23 January 2020.

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Subject:

Bradford Council's Equality Objectives Annual Progress Report (to June 2019)

Summary statement:

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were involved in the development of the equality objectives during 2015 and consequently requested to receive annual updates on progress thereafter.

This report outlines the annual progress on delivery of the Council's equality objectives (2016-2020) covering the period to June 2019.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

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1. SUMMARY

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were involved in the development of the equality objectives during 2015 and consequently requested to receive annual updates on progress thereafter.

This report outlines the annual progress on delivery of the Council's equality objectives (2016-2020) covering the period to June 2019.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bradford District has a diverse and young population. Bradford has more than a quarter of its population under 18, making it the youngest city in the UK. The district has a dynamic population of over half a million people originating from all corners of the globe, creating a rich cultural mix. Bradford Council aims to serve and represent the whole district in all its diversity. The Council's goal is to ensure that every part of the district and everyone who lives in it is equitably served. No-one must feel excluded and no-one unfairly favoured or disadvantaged.
- 2.2 The Council has legal responsibilities relating to equalities but these are a minimum requirement. Promoting equality in the district is part of the job of every Elected Member and Officer and there is understanding of the wider benefits of improving everyone's quality of life and our social responsibility. We therefore have equality objectives that reflect and support this diversity and ensure we maximise the vibrancy and energy of the people we work for.
- 2.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty sets out a number of aims (listed below) that public bodies should have regard to in their operation. This is supported by some specific duties which include the requirement on public bodies to set and publish at least one specific and measurable equality objective at least every four years and to publish information on how they are complying with the Equality Duty annually.
- 2.4 In the exercise of its functions public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.5 The defined set of protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; and (in relation to discrimination) marriage and civil partnership. In recognition of the Council's commitment to addressing poverty, Bradford's approach to equalities also looks at equality more broadly and taking into account the impact of our decisions on people on low income or with a low wage.

- 2.6 In September 2016, the Council's Executive approved a set of equality objectives for Bradford Council. The ambition for the objectives was to be strategic and only capture a few key areas which the whole organisation can contribute to and that will have maximum impact on the district. Details of the approved objectives can be found on the [Bradford Council web site](#). By 2020, we want to be able to demonstrate how they have made a difference over and above the day to day equalities work which the Council undertakes.
- 2.8 The equality objectives are embedded throughout our Council Plan and this ensures equalities remains central to the Council's work. The monitoring of the equality objectives also complements that of the Council Plan, with monitoring undertaken and discussed with the Corporate Management Team and the Portfolio Holder for equalities on a quarterly basis.
- 2.9 The equality objectives have been set for a four year period covering 2016 to 2020. As such flexibility has been built in to the plan to allow shorter term actions to be completed and new actions identified in support of achieving each objective. The district is an ever changing place, and the resources available to the Council and partners continue to change. So whilst maintaining a four year commitment to each objective, the detail of how we realise them may vary as time progresses. The milestone plan may as such alter accordingly.
- 2.11 It is worth noting that a number of topics captured in the equality objectives are reported to this and other Overview and Scrutiny Committees in their own right and in more detail. The objectives outline the highlights relevant to equalities, as a means of providing a Council wide equalities view. The reports received by this Committee over the last 12 months include:
- People Can – March 2019
 - Hate crime – April 2019
 - Workforce development – October 2019
 - Stronger Communities Strategy – January 2020 (this meeting)
 - Safer Communities Performance – January 2020 (this meeting)

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Appendix 1 presents a detailed outline of progress against each of the equality objectives' supporting milestones/actions up to 30 June 2019. The progress plan includes a breakdown of each action and milestone, progress on each, and where it was felt appropriate to set a target a latest figure or status is also included.
- 3.2 The following points provide the headlines and highlights of progress for each objective.
- 3.3 Community relations – ensure that the people of the district get on well together.

Highlights: This objective has in the last year been updated to reflect the intentions captured in the new Stronger Communities Strategy. This includes an increase in the number of pro-active volunteer led activities in the district, supported through the recruitment of a People Can co-ordinator. More activities

are now designed in collaboration with residents, and have included a Festival of Volunteering, Great Bradford Spring Clean, Great Get Together and Big Lunch.

Over the last year Bradford Council has worked with partners on interventions to raise awareness of hate crime and reduce incidences of it. Bradford College's UNITED Values now include British Values and the key principles of the Equality Act 2010. With the Police a bespoke package for schools has been designed. This includes the Sophie Lancaster Game which encourages young people to judge people through getting to know them and not on physical appearance. Many events and activities were also run during Hate Crime Awareness Week.

- 3.4 Employment and skills – promote inclusive growth through ensuring those most disadvantaged in the labour market are able to get the skills they need and access good jobs.

Highlights: The learning from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded Textile Academy Project completed in early 2018, continue to be used to shape our employment and skills programmes. Our apprenticeship programme continues to grow, with opportunities now promoted to all Children in Care. Traineeships in to apprenticeships are also now planned, which will help disabled people and young people in particular. Currently data on disabled people is limited in its accuracy as it is not a requirement to declare your disability status – our target is for 10% for disabled people, with 1% currently confirming they have a disability.

- 3.5 Organisational equalities culture – the Council is well run, fit for business and is fair and inclusive in its approach.

Highlights: Our new equalities governance structures introduced at the end of 2017 are now well embedded, with cross Council representation on the Cross Department Equality Group. Recommendations from the group are taken to Corporate Management Team (CMT) for action, comment and awareness raising. Topics that have been discussed in the last 12 months have included career progression for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues, service support for Children in Care, and recruitment. CMT also receive regular updates on the equality objectives throughout the year.

We now actively collect a full range of equality data through our recruitment processes, providing us with a stronger baseline through which to improve future practices. A comprehensive suite of training and development activities are available for staff including a recently updated equalities e-learning package, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) training, bespoke training for both the Cross Department Equality Group and Future Leaders and a focus on motor neurone disease as a health issue.

The Accessible Information Standard has now been embedded in the Health and Wellbeing Department, and the key messages shared across all Departmental Management Teams. Further work is planned to ensure relevant principles are pro-actively adopted across the whole Council.

Our procurement social value policy was updated in 2017/18 to ensure an equality focus. However 12 months on, a review is being undertaken to capture the changing procurement landscape, including maximising opportunities for local organisations to win contracts, and maximising opportunities for all equality groups.

- 3.6 Equality data – our data better provides us with the right insight, evidence and intelligence to make well informed decisions that impact on our communities.

We capture and publish a broad range of equality workforce data, though challenges remain in encouraging colleagues to declare their protected characteristics, disability in particular. We also have access to district wide equality demographics providing us with an overview of our population.

Council services undertake equality monitoring which is required to establish a better understanding of the users of their services. This information is then used for equality assessment purposes to better inform decision making.

- 3.7 **Next Steps** – We have a statutory requirement to set specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years. The objectives are therefore due for a full review in 2020. To ensure equalities is at the heart of the Council's work, a commitment has been made to identify the objectives as part of the new Council Plan developments. This will ensure the objectives capture the most important equality issues for the Council and that they are fully integrated and central to the work of the Council. Consultation with key groups, officers and Elected Members will be a key part of the development process. This will include discussions with this Committee.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

Delivery of the actions in support of the equality objectives will be met from existing resources.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

There are no significant risk management or governance issues arising out of the recommendations of this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 consolidated a wide range of equalities legislation that had until then been contained in separate statutes. Section 149 of the Act introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty which requires local authorities and other public bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

6.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty is also supported by two specific duties requiring public bodies to set and publish at least one specific and measurable equality objective at least every four years and to publish information on how they are complying with the Equality Duty annually. This is set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

As suggested in this report it is important that the Council gives due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in any decision making it undertakes. The Council will continue to undertake activity to ensure that equality is considered through the development and delivery of all its functions. In addition, the equality objectives themselves will allow the Council to focus on a few key areas which will have maximum impact on the district and work with partners in their delivery.

As a consequence of a decision made by this Committee in October 2017, all reports which contribute to the delivery of an equality objective now require a supporting statement acknowledging this fact. This allows Committee Members to appreciate more broadly the work taking place on the equality objectives throughout the year, in addition to this annual progress update.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications from the equality objectives.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

There are no gas emission impacts from the equality objectives.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The public sector equality duty explicitly states that public authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation. This is therefore a fundamental element of the considerations that the authority gives when assessing equality impacts on any changes to any of its functions. 'Community relations' is also one of the Council's equality objectives.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights Act impacts from the equality objectives.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Some of the actions supporting the equality objectives are in connection to the workforce, both in development, training and diversity. The Trade Unions will as such be kept up to date as necessary on the equality elements of the workforce development programme.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There will be no specific ward implications as the equality objectives will have district wide impact.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Does not apply

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Members comment on and support the progressing work on the Council's equality objectives 2016-2020.

9.2 That Members request a final progress update on the equality objectives (2016-2020) in 12 months time.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives Detailed Progress Update to June 2019.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Bradford Council's Equality Objectives Overview -

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/bradford-council-s-equality-objectives/>