

REPORT TO:	Cabinet 19th January 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	7
SUBJECT:	Equality Annual Report 2014
LEAD OFFICER:	Sarah Ireland Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Watson Cabinet Member for Safety and Justice
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

The Council's Equality Annual Report 2104 provides an update on the progress made in implementing the statutory four year equality policy objectives to reduce inequality and promote opportunity and fairness for all communities in the borough. It is aligned with the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. The Equality Annual Report sets out the progress made in line with the statutory duty to publish information each year.

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON AND WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:

This Equality Annual Report 2014 supports the Council's ambition to reduce inequality and promote opportunity and fairness for all of our communities by working with partners in the public, business and voluntary sectors in order to secure better outcomes for all.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial implications of the Council's plans and annual report for achieving its corporate equality objectives are contained within the Council's budget and Financial Strategy. Beyond the reports production costs, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO:

This is not a key executive decision. As part of the core policy framework it is reserved to Council for decision.

The Leader of the Council has agreed that Cabinet have delegated power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked recommend to Council to approve:

- 1.1 The Equality Annual Report 2014 to comply with the Council's statutory equality duties to publish information related to the three aims of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 Agree that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority, in consultation

with the Cabinet Member for Safety and Justice to make minor amendments to the draft Equality Annual Report and to agree the report for publication by the 31 January 2015.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Equality Annual Report 2014 (the report) provides an update on the progress made in implementing the statutory four year equality objectives agreed by Cabinet in March 2012 (Minute.A33/12). The Equality Annual Report 2014 supports the Council to demonstrate compliance with the general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The information included in this report is drawn from a range of sources from across the Council, including work delivered through the themed partnerships and the Council's contractors. This includes collating six monthly monitoring reports on the annual equality action plan, review of updates on the corporate plan and departmental service plans 2013-15.
- 2.3 It has also involved identifying activities that demonstrate good practice on equality and working with activity leads to gather more detailed information on how these activities have delivered positive outcomes for local people, particularly those that are most vulnerable and experience exclusion. This information has been used to produce some good practice stories that describe the positive impact of some of the equality and inclusion initiatives that the Council implemented during the previous year.
- 2.4 The Equality Annual Report 2014 is structured around the four strategic themes:
- Stronger Communities
 - Children, Families and Learners
 - Social Care, Health and Housing
 - Workforce

Each section of the report sets out the current equality policy objectives that have been agreed for the strategic theme and highlights a summary of the key activities and projects that the Council has focused on over the last year to deliver them.

It also contains good practice stories that aim to provide an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community partners and engaged with our customers to deliver equality initiatives that support work on improving service outcomes for diverse communities in the borough.

- 2.5 The Council's current equality policy objectives 2012 -16, follow from the enactment

of the Equality Act 2010 (Act), which includes the public sector equality duty (PSED), further details are set out in section 3 of this report.

- 2.6 The equality policy objectives provide a framework for taking forward the Council's agenda and cover all the Council's functions including everything it does in partnership or through contract.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act), contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Act that came into force on 5 April 2011. The duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Nine characteristics are protected in law and these include age, gender, disability, race, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment
- 3.2 The Act and PSED support good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.
- 3.3 The PSED is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The 'public sector equality duty' is the formal title of the duty, the 'general equality duty' is the overarching requirement or substance of the duty, and the 'specific duties' are intended to enable better performance of the general equality duty.
- 3.4 The general equality duty requires the Council, in the exercise of functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- 3.5 The Council is also required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty. In addition:
- All listed bodies (except schools and pupil referral units) must do this at least annually by 31 January;
 - Schools and pupil referral units must do this, at least annually by 6 April
- 3.6 This information must relate to people who are:
- the Council's employees
 - affected by its policies and practices (for example, service users).

4. PUBLISHING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish information relevant to the three aims of the equality duty (paragraph 3.4 above) annually by 31 January. Schools should also publish information by 6 April annually.
- 4.2 The Council uses existing routes for publication rather than establishing new ones. This will involve making information available on its website (internal and external), and including information in reports for decision at cabinet and other Council committees as well as the Croydon Observatory.
- 4.3 The specific statutory duty to publish information includes needs assessments, staff profiles, access to and the take-up of services, performance, satisfaction surveys, complaints and engagement. All information where available and appropriate to do so should be disaggregated or broken down by protected characteristics as well as make explicit reference to the aims of the public sector equality duty. It must be free and accessible to the public.
- 4.4 The types of information includes Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA); Crime Assessments, Children's Needs Analysis, Local Account of Social Care, an Economic bulletin, a Public Health Annual Report as well as data about the boroughs demographic and deprivation profiles found on the Croydon's Observatory. The workforce profile and staff survey results are also published using existing communication channels.
- 4.5 The Council, like most public sector organisations, publishes an annual report setting out the progress it makes implementing the equality objectives and its arrangements for publishing information. At **appendix one** is the Council's Equality Annual Report 2014 (minor updates to the draft report will be completed by the date of final publication 31 January 2015).

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Croydon Council aims to be an excellent authority for all of its communities, working with partners in the public, business, voluntary and community sectors to deliver the highest standard of equalities practice in securing better outcomes for local people. As part of delivering this the Council wants Croydon to be a place that is cohesive, where all communities get on well together and everyone is able to access the opportunities and life chances on offer.
- 5.2 The Council's intention is to develop an interim Equality and Inclusion Policy in March 2015 as well as more detailed analysis related to the borough profile in the summer 2015. These new equality documents will be aligned with the new outcome framework Ambitious for Croydon. In addition, following the recommendations arising from Croydon's Opportunity and Fairness Commission, a final Equality and Inclusion Policy will be produced containing a set of new four year equality objectives in line with the Council's statutory duties to publish these by 1st April 2016.

6. CONSULTATION

The Council's programme of equality analysis for 2014-15 is set out in the Equality Annual Report at appendix one. The Council expects officers responsible for an activity in the programme to ensure robust consultation has taken place that supports the equality analysis.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Council's Equality Annual Report 2014 incorporates the council's public sector equality duties as well as the national equality service improvement framework. It demonstrates the Council's compliance with the current legal framework.
- 7.2 Failure to implement and annually report on the Council's Equality objectives and actions will expose the Council to risk of claims for breach of statutory duty. Failing to implement actions identified in the equality analysis conducted to support decision-making or compliance with the public sector equality duties will also expose the Council to risk.
- 7.3 The Equality Annual Report is published in an electronic format and does not incur a publication cost to the Council. The number of hard copies produced will be the minimum required to reduce cost.
- 7.3 Publication of the Equality Annual Report will incur production costs. The Annual report must be accessible and therefore made available in different formats, in summary and electronically - on the Council's website and intranet. Provision for this is available from existing budgets available to the Chief Executive's Department.

1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

The cost of producing the Equality Annual Report 2014 is found from existing budgets.

2 The effect of the decision

The approval of the Annual Report will have no effect on the current financial situation. Action has been delivered in accordance with the risk management process. Equality analysis (impact assessments) that relate to Council activity including that delivered by themed partnerships has been incorporated into the risk management register for the Local Strategic Partnership.

3 Risks

The approval of the Equality Annual Report will have no effect on the current financial situation.

4 Options

Delivery of activity found in the action plan is subject to financial resources. Decisions to change or stop a function or activity will be subject to equality analysis of its impact. A cut in funding could risk the delivery of the strategy and its objectives.

5 **Future savings/efficiencies**

There are no savings or efficiencies associated with the approval of this strategy.
(Approved by: Diane Ellender, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer on behalf of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer)

8. **COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

8.1 The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer comments that this Equality Annual Report will contribute to the fulfilment of the Council's statutory duties to advance equalities within the functions that we provide in the borough and to our workforce. There are no additional legal considerations beyond those detailed in the body of the report.

(Approved by: Gabriel Macgregor, Head of Corporate Law on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer)

9. **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

9.1 An equality objective and related measures in this strategy is aligned to the Council's People Strategy. Equality is integral to everything the council does as an organisation and in partnership with others including becoming an employer of choice.

9.2 (Approved by: Hanza Bharadia, HR Business Partner, on behalf of Director of Workforce)

10. **EQUALITIES IMPACT**

10.1 The equality analysis that supports the current equality policy objectives which were published in March 2012. The information found in this annual report provides an updated summary of activities that the Council agreed to implement to address the findings of the equality analysis.

A link to the equality analysis is below:

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/contents/departments/community/pdf/EqIAEqStrategy>

10.2 Further information and analysis of equality and inclusion in Croydon is available on the Croydon Observatory:

<http://www.croydonobservatory.org/>

10.3 A detailed equality analysis to set the new statutory objectives for 1 April 2016 will be provided through the work of the Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission. The work of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission is essentially an extensive analysis of equality and inclusion issues.

10.4 Any agreed recommendations from the Fairness Commission report will support and inform future budget decisions, the development of statutory equality objectives required by 1 April 2016, as well as a new corporate Equality and Inclusion Strategy and borough-wide Community Strategy.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

11.1 None specifically identified.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

12.1 Equality objectives, measures and actions related to community safety are identified in the Strategy and aligned with the Crime Reduction Strategy.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

13.1 To support the Council demonstrate transparency and fairness in its operations as well as compliance with its public sector equality general duty and specific duties as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

14. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

14.1 None.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX: printed separately

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