

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 31 AUGUST 2010

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

REACHING EXCELLENT LEVEL OF THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EFLG) - QUARTER ONE 2010/2011 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Welcome to the first corporate performance monitoring report for 2010/2011 for reaching the excellent level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 1.2 As an 'achieving' Council (formerly known as level 3), departments should be embedding processes and systems that have been developed over the last two years, for example equality impact assessments, online equality and diversity training, flexible working arrangements, inclusive community engagement structures, etc.
- 1.3 However, as the Council works towards achieving 'excellent' status by November 2011, departments need to be developing more innovative activities that other organisations can learn from; activities that the Council can demonstrate have encouraged efficiencies as well as improved the quality of life of residents.
- 1.4 Therefore the format of reporting has changed to reflect a) the themes and expectations of the Equality Framework, b) the format of departmental action plans, and c) to present progress in a more informative and useful way.
- 1.5 Within this report you will find examples of:
 - Following best practice (green milestones)
 - Innovation (green milestones)
 - Opportunities for evidence case studies (green milestones)
 - Areas for further improvement (red and amber milestones)

2. Summary of Progress of Actions / Milestones (Green / Amber / Red)

Action Plan	Total Number of Projects	Green	Amber	Red	Not Applicable
Adult Social Services Action Plan	25	10	12	3	0
Children & Young People Action Plan	10	10	0	0	0
Technical Services Action Plan	38	36	2	0	0
Finance Action Plan	52	47	2	0	3
Corporate Services & Law, HR, Asset Management Action Plan	80	52	24	2	2
Community Cohesion Action Plan	24	8	8	5	3
Equality Watch Scheme 2009- 2012	44	34	10	0	0
Quarter 1 Totals	273	187	58	10	8

3. KNOWING OUR COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITY MAPPING (Theme 1)

3.1 Examples of following best practice

- Developed process for quality assuring equality impact assessments (Adult Social Services)
- Implemented, with Council partners, the GIS mapping project for departmental data sets (Children and Young People)
- Further developing and implementing the corporate Customer Profiling Policy (Finance)
- Requesting the inclusion of postcode data in the new customer logging system. Target date to be launched September 2010 (Finance)
- Established an equality and cohesion communications action plan (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

3.2 Examples of innovation

- Identifying those areas, during internal audits which are inadequate in terms of equality mapping and equitable access to services (Finance)

3.3 Examples of opportunities for case studies

- Considering the use of incentives to increase customer questionnaire returns (Finance)
- Co-ordinating the implementation and analysis of regular customer services surveys and VCAW consultation programme (Finance)
- Established a Council / LSP Knowledge & Intelligence Network (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Completing a community cohesion mapping report for Wirral (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

- Implementing a Community Asset Transfer scheme (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

3.4 Areas for further improvement

- Review why low levels of Black and Ethnic Minority individuals accessing mainstream services (Adult Social Services)
- Develop process for monitoring ethnicity of service users accessing community based services (Adult Social Services)
- Service areas to make use of available data, where possible and relevant, on community needs. For example, the work conducted by NHS Wirral/Social Services/CYPD on 'Joint Needs Assessment' (Technical Services)
- Identification on committee reports of Equality Impact Assessments seems to be inconsistently applied at present (Technical Services)
- LSP wide shared knowledge / data hub (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

4. LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITMENT (Theme 2)

4.1 Examples of following best practice

- Establishing a working group to drive departmental action plan forward (Adult Social Services)
- Equality impact assessment training being provided to all managers and relevant staff (Adult Social Services)
- Meeting hosted to discuss regional integration of diversity within personalisation programme (Adult Social Services)
- Quarterly updates to strategic leadership team on equality and diversity (Adult Social Services)
- Equality objectives to be included in contracts put out to tender (Children and Young People)
- Review of all existing promotional materials in Children's Social Care in order to ensure that minority groups are fully represented (Children and Young People)
- To work with Biffa, Colas and any other contractors to ensure compliance with equality objectives (Technical Services)
- All members of the Senior Management Team and Operational Management Team receive agenda/minutes from the Departmental Equality Group (Technical Services)
- The Council raised rainbow flags on International Day Against Homophobia (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Staff Forum)
- Councillor Ian Lewis is now the equality champion for the Council administration (Elected Members)
- The Director for Adult Social Services continues to Chair the Corporate Equality and Cohesion Group (Chief Officers)

4.2 Examples of innovation

- Establishing a Children in Care Council (Children and Young People)
- Developing an LSP wide Wirral Equalities Charter in consultation with the third sector (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Young people are invited to shadow the Chief Executive, who is champion for younger people, and the next person to do this will be Leah Cope who last year was one of Wirral's United Kingdom Youth Parliamentarians (Chief Officers)

- The Deputy Chief Executive, as champion for older people, continues to support the Older People's Parliament and Executive Board (Chief Officers)

4.3 Examples of opportunities for case studies

- Highlight reports now presented to the Departmental Equality Group, including service user initiative and staff initiatives (Adult Social Services)
- Procurement Strategy implementation - reviewing and monitoring processes to measure equality outcomes, i.e. following up what actually happens on the ground (Finance)

4.4 Examples of areas for improvement

- Contracts held by community based services to promote best practice in equality and diversity (Adult Social Services)
- Develop awareness of the corporate code on bullying and harassment (Adult Social Services)
- Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop a robust committee process for integrating equality and cohesion into the scrutiny process (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Further develop an equality and cohesion leadership framework for Chief Officers and Elected Members (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Build a corporate, outcomes focussed evidence base for equality and cohesion (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Establish Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Working Group to refresh EIA template, monitor annual EIA schedule, monitor low, medium and high EIA actions, monitor Cabinet and Committee reports for EIA's, ensure EIA's are completed during service reviews, develop a consistent quality assurance system for EIA's, and liaise with the Comprehensive Engagement Strategy Steering Group re. consultation arrangements for EIA's (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Further develop the Council's Performance Improvement Management System to capture the narrowing of equality gaps (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION (Theme 3)

5.1 Examples of following best practice

- Developing a feedback programme – 'you said / we did' to close the loop on findings from consultation activities (Finance)
- Relaunching the IAMF hate crime reporting process to include refresher training for all customer services staff (Finance)
- Further developing partnerships and processes in order to implement the Comprehensive Engagement Strategy (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Completed five access audits to Council buildings (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Equality Watch membership scheme nearing 400 members Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Developing a self-assessment process for access auditing Council buildings (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

- New equality and cohesion pages developed for the Council's website (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Developed an action plan for 'English for people who speak other languages' – ESOL (CYPD / Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

5.2 Examples of innovation

- Highway Maintenance street light trial in New Brighton – replacing existing lanterns with new 'white light' ones to aid older people (Technical Services)
- Assessing the feasibility of offering concessions for people with disabilities – particularly where there is a positive impact. For example, Vehicle Pavement Crossings which allow better access to a property (Technical Services)
- Progressing digital signage concept in One Stop Shops as a tool to increase customer participation and engagement (Finance)

5.3 Examples of opportunities for case studies

- Pedestrian Forum meets quarterly with WIRED, Merseytravel's Access officer, Wirral Council's Footpaths Access Officer and other groups/interested parties (Technical Services)
- £100,000 per year Disability Discrimination Act funding programme for modifications (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management / Technical Services)
- Established a Hate Crime MARAC (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

5.4 Examples of areas for further improvement

- Strengthen involvement of all equality strands (Adult Social Services)
- Develop independent feedback mechanisms and monitor feedback from satisfaction surveys (Adult Social Services)
- Develop information gathering processes which respond to and meet the cultural needs of all sections of the community (Adult Social Services)
- Assess the needs of people and support them to assess their own needs. Use the information to inform future business plans (Adult Social Services)
- Record all hate incidents (Adult Social Services)
- Recruit community champions to the Corporate Equality & Cohesion Group (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

6. RESPONSIVE CUSTOMER SERVICES (Theme 4)

6.1 Examples of following best practice

- None reported this quarter

6.2 Examples of innovation

- None reported this quarter

6.3 Examples of opportunities for case studies

- Creating a focus group comprising disabled children in order that they have a say in services designed to deliver safeguarding services to them (Children and Young People)

- New literature to be produced to increase pension scheme membership with logistics being explored on how to target gaps in membership from different groups. Further expansion of road shows and pension surgeries (Finance)

6.4 Examples of areas for further improvement

- None reported this quarter

7. A MODERN AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE (Theme 5)

7.1 Examples of following best practice

- Currently reviewing capacity to increase equality and diversity training to all staff (Adult Social Services)
- Schools and staff are trained to be more aware of the barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people (Children and Young People)
- Staff Equality and Diversity training being commissioned to address the needs of staff in particular a) poverty awareness, and b) safeguarding and conflicts with religion, faith or culture (Children and Young People)
- Developing training for Foster Carers in order that the needs of Asylum seeking children are addressed (Children and Young People)
- Racial Incidents, both in schools and the department, continue to be reported and monitored by the Department (Children and Young People)
- Great strides made to ensure a more consistent approach procedures, for example on absence, capability and disciplinary (Technical Services)
- Staff Survey has been repeated. We are the only department to have completed this. Work on an action plan has begun (Technical Services)
- 100% of office based staff, including new starters, have completed Elumos (Technical Services)
- Appointed officers to deal with issues relating to Dignity at Work - bullying and harassment (Technical Services)
- Encouraging and promoting staff participation in employee forums (Finance)
- Highlighting one Equality and Diversity topic/policy area every two months through the Team Brief (Finance)
- Present statistics of grievance / disciplinary (no. of cases etc.) in team briefs regularly, so that staff can see that things are followed up (Finance)
- Discrimination, harassment and bullying being monitored corporately (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Staff survey processes being mapped out at the moment and new internal communications methods also being developed (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Three equality and cohesion taster sessions provided at corporate staff inductions (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Reasonable adjustments advice available for staff and managers (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Developed action plan in order to be assessed for Stonewall's Equality Index and Regional Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Strategy (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Staff Forum)
- Updated equality and diversity pages of the Council's intranet (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

7.2 Examples of innovation

- Equality Watch Pledge Campaign (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- A sub-group of the Disability Diversity Forum has been established to look at the issue of Dyslexia in the workplace (Disability Diversity Forum)
- Recently won a North West Employer Equality & Diversity Award for a football event, delivering two separate events one to children in partnership with Tranmere Rovers and the other to adults (Black Workers' Group)

7.3 Examples of opportunities for case studies

- Gathering data from a questionnaire to women staff in Technical Services to see what they think about career development opportunities, barriers etc (Women's Diversity Forum)
- Theatre And diversity training sessions for Managers and frontline staff (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

7.4 Examples of areas for further improvement

- Good data levels of workforce exist but need more focus on sexual orientation, religion or belief. Need to profile equality strands in terms of salary grade also (Adult Social Services)
- Positive action programme implementation (Adult Social Services)
- Ensure staff are kept up to date with all issues concerning religion and culture (Adult Social Services)
- Departmental harassment officers must be competent and training updated annually (Adult Social Services)
- School Crossing Patrol service still awaiting guidance regarding Internet based access to Elumos (Technical Services)
- Workforce 100% mapped and published annually on Council's website (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Addressing under-representation to be included within the workforce strategy and implemented (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Equal Pay plan to be implemented (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Flexible working arrangements to be monitored corporately (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Elumos training to be completed by all staff (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)
- Corporate approach to positive action required (Corporate Services / Law, HR, Asset Management)

8. Conclusion

8.1 All departmental equality and cohesion action plans progressed well during the first quarter period with 68% of milestones being recorded as 'green'.

8.2 However, when all departmental milestones are mapped against the expectations of the Equality Framework, activity gaps can be identified, i.e. the examples of following best practice and areas for improvement contained within in this report are activities the Council should be undertaking as an 'achieving' council. The examples of

innovation and opportunities for evidence case studies are activities the Council should be generating in order to be considered as an 'excellent' council.

- 8.3 The Council needs to be generating best practice (innovation), not just following best practice generated by others, in order to demonstrate a reduction in inequalities within the workplace, across all service areas and across the Borough. Ensuring the Council builds an outcomes focussed evidence base will also be crucial to being assessed as an excellent council.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to note progress of the Council's various equality action plans.
- 9.2 This quarter one report to be submitted to the Corporate Equality and Cohesion Group, the Departmental Equality and Cohesion Groups, and the Performance Management Group, in order to generate ideas for developing more innovative activities and ways of documenting case studies.
- 9.3 Departmental Equality and Cohesion Groups to review their current action plans in order to identify where examples of innovation and evidence case studies can be developed. To be presented to the Corporate Equality and Cohesion Group by December 2010.
- 9.4 Departmental equality leads to generate more inter-departmental activity, especially where duplication is taking place, e.g. equality and diversity training, monitoring of hate crimes and hate incidents, developing the role of dignity at work officers.

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