

Subject:	Equalities Task and Finish Group Report	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny	Date:	17 th July 2017
Report of:	Equalities Task and Finish Group	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: N/A
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: N/A
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)		
1.1	<p>That the Cabinet or relevant Portfolio Holder responds on the following recommendations within 2 months of this report:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a new Equalities Strategy is produced and goes through the committee process to be approved at October's Cabinet. 2. That consideration is given to a review of the current Neighbourhood Forum arrangements, particularly with regards to engagement with minority and hard-to-reach groups. 		

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To inform members of the work carried out by the Equalities Task and Finish Group.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- There is a risk that the Council's Equalities Strategy is out of date.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 A small Task and Finish Group was set up following discussions at Overview and Scrutiny in November 2016. The Group would look at equalities processes within the Council and the current Equalities Strategy.

5.2 Four meetings took place and a further meeting will take place in August to review the draft Equalities Strategy before it begins the committee process. Further information is available within the report at Appendix 1.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Any financial implications arising will be contained within existing budget resources.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 Any legal implications will be addressed in future reports which will accompany the refreshed strategy.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

8.1 As this is a recommendation, there are no policy implications, at this point in time. Once the Policy is refreshed and a new one presented, the policy implications will be included in that report.

8.2 The Equalities Task and Finish Group report has been circulated to the Task and Finish Group Members, the relevant portfolio holder, the Equalities Champion, the Director of Communities and the statutory officers, as noted sections 6-8 of this report.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The current Equalities Strategy is out of date and requires a complete refresh and overhaul. This is being undertaken by the new Policy and Performance Officer and the Task and Finish Groups hopes that this will be endorsed by the Portfolio Holder and a new Strategy can be in place by October 2017.

Appendix Number	Description
Appendix 1	Report of the Equalities Task and Finish Group

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT**

EQUALITIES

JULY 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th November 2016 it was agreed to set up a small group to review equalities and associated processes within the Council.
- 1.2 This small group consisted of Councillor Lythgoe, Councillor Essex and the Co-opted Member, Zieda Ali, with any other interested members asked to contact the Scrutiny Support Officer in post at that time. At later meetings, the Council's Equalities Champion was invited and kept up to date with minutes and agendas.
- 1.3 Officer support was provided by Jenni Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer, Clare Law, HR Manager, Sam Plum, Director of Communities and later in the process, Ray Kay, Policy and Performance Officer.
- 1.4 The remit of the group was discussed and was a very wide remit to begin with. Terms of reference were agreed and are attached at Appendix 1.

2. MEETINGS AND FINDINGS

- 2.1 Four meetings have taken place to date, with a final meeting planned for 8th August 2017 to review the new Equalities Strategy before it begins the committee process.
- 2.2 The second meeting was attended by representatives from Chorley Council (Councillor Hasina Khan and Vicky Willett) who shared Chorley's practices and strategies. This contribution was very valuable and the Group would like to thank Chorley Council for their time and assistance.
- 2.3 The meetings started with a wide discussion regarding equalities and it was noted that the Equalities Strategy was out of date and required overhauling. The equalities processes in general were discussed and it was felt that the council could be doing more to engage with minority groups.
- 2.4 At the third meeting, after discussion, it was felt that the wider issue of consultation and engagement fell within the council's business planning process and that this was something that could be picked up by the Performance Management Task and Finish Group.
- 2.5 At the final meeting on 21st June 2017 discussion too, place on the format and effectiveness of the neighbourhood forums. In consultation with officers, in particular the new Policy and Performance Officer, a timetable for delivery of a new equalities strategy was mapped out as follows:-
 - 4th September – Overview and Scrutiny
 - 20th September – Cabinet Agenda Setting
 - 11th October - Cabinet

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET

3.1 The Equalities Task and Finish Group puts forward the following recommendations to Cabinet:-

1. That a new Equalities Strategy is produced and goes through the committee process to be approved at October's Cabinet.
2. That consideration is given to a review of the current Neighbourhood Forum arrangements, particularly with regards to engagement with minority and hard-to-reach groups.

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EQUALITIES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Group would be a small group to look at Equalities within the Council as follows:-

- To review the current Equality policies and procedure and Equality Impact Assessment Process.
- To establish any improvements needed both internally and externally.
- To look at how performance overview, consultation and equalities can be integrated with the strategic planning process.

How would we do it?

- Consult with other local authorities and collate information on best practice.
- Meet with the HR Manager and other officers as necessary to obtain information and ideas.
- Consult with the lead on performance within the Council.