

CABINET	DATE 21 October 2020	ITEM NO 9
TITLE Adoption of Equality and Equity Charter and Equalities Objectives 2020-2024	WARD (S) All	
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Communities and Environment	CABINET MEMBER Culture and Communities	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Key	FINAL DECISION To be made at this meeting on the recommendations in this report	

I **Decision required**

- I.1 To approve the new Equality and Equity charter that seeks wider Borough support for the Council's ambitions to promote Equality.
- I.2 To note the public consultation that took place throughout July and August 2020 on the draft Equality and Equity Charter. The summary of the consultation is at Appendix D.
- I.3 To approve the six new Equality Objectives for 2020-24 (as required under the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the associated actions which have been derived from a variety of consultation exercises and are contained at Appendix E.
- I.4 Note the steps being taken by the Council to ensure Equalities planning, outcomes and objectives are placed at the centre of the Council's service delivery and business planning processes.
- I.5 Note that BAME communities have been disproportionately impacted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- I.6 Agree to continue monitoring the Headline Equalities Measures (HEMS) list at Appendix A as a means of quantifying progress on Equality Objectives.
- I.7 Note the proposal to conduct further work on embedding Equalities across the borough through the work of the Council and its partners and in particular the ongoing work by an officer working group to develop an Equality and Equity Action Plan that will monitor the delivery of the Charter's pledges.

1.8 To approve the establishment of a Councillor working group to oversee and review work on Race Equality as well as a community led Race Equality Advisory Board. Details of the operation of each are to be delegated to the Director of Communities and Environment.

2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

2.1 The Council's approach to Equalities underpins all the eight Corporate Objectives.

2.2 This report specifically relates to the Council's agreed high-level objectives as follows:

- A Great Place to Be – To work to ensure there is continued community cohesion in Greenwich and equality of access for all

3. **Purpose of Report**

3.1 This overview report sets out plans to further embed the new Equalities Objectives, best practice, engagement and outcomes into the service delivery and business planning processes of the Council.

3.2 The report draws together existing workstreams on Equalities and sets how this forms an integrated response to inequality, promoting social mobility and meeting the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

3.3 This report is also an initial Council response to the findings of Public Health England's report identifying the disparity in COVID-19 related outcomes experienced by BAME communities.

4. **Introduction and Background**

4.1 The Council's approach to Equalities is underpinned by our Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equalities Act 2010 and lists nine protected characteristics as follows:-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex

- sexual orientation

- 4.2 Our duty is expressed locally through our Equality Objectives 2016-2020 (Appendix B) and measured through the 22 Headline Equality Measures (HEMS) which are listed at Appendix A. The Objectives are due for refresh and consultation took place from late 2019 to February 2020 but progress was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.3 Given the role Equalities issues have played in the extent and severity of the impact of COVID-19, both nationally and in the borough, this delay offers an opportunity to review the approach to Equalities policies, strategies and plans.
- 4.4 In June 2020 Public Health England published its report '*Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19*' which identified that whilst the largest disparity found was by Age, '*Death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups*'. Multiple other relevant factors related to gender, deprivation, geography, occupation and the presence of pre-existing comorbidities.
- 4.5 The Council has a long history of identifying solutions to complex Equalities issues by working in partnership with a range of partners including those in the Voluntary and Community Sectors. This report proposes measures to extend and deepen that approach.
- 4.6 This overview report also draws together a range of Equalities related workstreams and proposes a pathway to develop a more integrated approach to addressing our ambitions to promote Equality and Equity.
- 4.7 In 2018 the Council commissioned the Runnymede Trust to produce the Greenwich Race Equality Scorecard which was published in November 2020.
- 4.8 The report placed its findings in the context of continuing austerity and the budget cuts experienced by local government:

“These cuts are having a major impact on the role that councils play in the provision of services. The Runnymede Trust’s budget briefing highlighted the ways in which the effects of austerity policies, directly or indirectly, increase racial inequality (Runnymede Trust, 2018). In this context it is even more important that close attention is paid to ensuring that all local residents are treated equally and are able to flourish. (p.2)”

- 4.9 This document provides a baseline assessment of racial disparity and inequality that will be reported on an annual basis. It is important to stress

that this is a system wide analysis and requires the support and participation of a wide range of external partners.

- 4.10 As part of the Leader's response to tackling disparities identified in the Race Equality Scorecard a Race Equality Partnership Board was established and met for the first time in January 2020. The Partnership agreed that it should mainly focus on the specific priorities of disparities and inequalities in the Criminal Justice system and in Education to further develop solutions. However, the scope was not restricted to issues solely included within the Scorecard.

Developing datasets to aid insight, analysis and improve service delivery and outcomes

- 4.11 The Council is refreshing the approach to enabling evidenced based decision making and service design.
- 4.12 As an example ward profiles are being produced and will be published to enable the design and delivery of accessible and responsive services to customers and residents. Ward Profiles can be an important tool in understanding equalities issues at a local level. They use a combination of aggregated data from CACI's Acorn, Acorn Wellbeing and Paycheck products and actual data from ONS, Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions. This means the information presented can be used as a starting point for further investigation into the identities of and the issues that residents face.
- 4.13 They highlight key demographic information about the ward's population including ethnicity, religion and country of birth and compares it to the whole of Greenwich. This follows with key statistics about the ward's residents in terms of housing, health, education, and employment/finances. Through building this picture, we can begin to consider if there is any correlation between the demographic makeup of a ward and discrepancies and disparities identified when comparing wards. The ward profiles can be used as a starting point for further research into key issues and potentially shape conversations surrounding equalities issues at a ward level. Through developing a better understanding of the makeup of our wards, we can begin to consider how services could be tailored to fit the needs of our residents in each of our wards and address inequalities going forward.
- 4.14 Furthermore following a workstream arising from the Community Hub the Council has identified a number of datasets that can be used to identify vulnerable residents so that support can be tailored and targeted as required.

Whilst this work is at an early stage many vulnerable residents will also have protected characteristics and thus application of the analysis of the data will support the Council's ambitions to promote Equality and Equity.

5. Headline Equalities Measures and the emerging Equalities Objectives following consultation in 2019/2020

5.1 The Council is required under the Equality Act, and Public Sector Equality Duty, to produce four yearly objectives, which are specific and measurable. The first set was agreed by Cabinet in 2012, and a revised set was produced in 2016 for the period 2016-2020.

5.2 Headline Equality Measures (HEMS) are used to measure progress made on the Council's Equality Objectives. The 22 headline equality measures are arranged under eight themes as follows:

- Workforce
- Employment and skills
- Education
- A healthy and safe living environment
- Children and families
- Social care and health
- Housing
- Tourism, culture and sport

5.3 In line with the requirements under the Equality Act, work began in October 2019 to develop a new set of Equality Objectives for 2020 to 2024. Consultation with members of staff, voluntary sector organisations, trade union and councillors took place in February 2020. This work was paused due to staff redeployment to emergency COVID-19 response.

5.4 Following completion of a public consultation on our new Equality Charter (Appendix C) work has been completed on developing the new Equality Objectives and SMART objectives.

5.5 The proposed Equality Objectives with 'smart' actions can be seen in Appendix E. The objectives have been reviewed in response to the Equality and Equity Charter consultation to ensure feedback is embedded into the Council's Equality work streams.

6. Equalities and Equity Charter

- 6.1 The Royal Greenwich Equality and Equity Charter (final version enclosed at Appendix C) sets out high level pledges that will support a fairer, safer, accessible and inclusive Royal Greenwich.
- 6.2 The Equalities and Equity Charter is a set of commitments promoting the values of equality, diversity and inclusion in Greenwich. The Council alone cannot achieve this and the Charter has been out for consultation to voluntary and community sector groups, businesses and partners of Royal Greenwich, including BAME, LGBTQI+ and disability organisations, to ensure the collaborative development of the pledges.
- 6.3 Additionally, the development of the Equality Objectives 2020-2024 has provided context to the Charter with measurable and smart objectives which the Council can take forward. Although it is recognised that the Charter will extend beyond the Council's Equality Objectives which are focused by definition on the nine protected characteristics.
- 6.5 We have used a wide variety of channels including print, digital and direct communication to raise awareness of the Charter among residents and organisations and encourage participation in the consultation.
- 6.6 The consultation received 768 responses, with 56 of these from an organisation. The comments largely agree with the Equality and Equity Charter commitments. Appendix D provides a summary of the key findings.
- 6.9 Following the consultation, the Charter is now finalised. We will be encouraging individuals and organisations to sign up to the Charter, pledging their support and commitment to creating a fairer, safer, accessible and inclusive Royal Greenwich.

7. Greenwich Race Equality Scorecard: key actions and timelines

- 7.1 In Autumn 2018 the Council commissioned the Runnymede Trust to undertake independent research and explores the challenges facing ethnic minority groups in our borough. It was agreed the research would focus on the following areas:

- Criminal Justice
- Education

- Employment
- Housing
- Health
- Community Participation

7.2 The report includes responses from public sector partners and the local VCS, which enabled these groups to come together to discuss the findings and areas where more detailed information, would be needed to support further cross-organisational work in this area.

7.3 In November 2019, the Race Equality Partnership was launched to allow a wide range of stakeholders to come together to use the Runnymede research as a starting point for a wider multidisciplinary approach to understanding and alleviating inequalities in the Borough.

7.4 In January 2020, the Partnership agreed on key priorities having taken stock of the work which is already taking place, Runnymede research and additional data statistics provided by leads. The agreed priority areas to take forward are:

- **Criminal Justice** – focussing on a number of specific areas, including Stop and Search, hate crime and youth entrants to the Criminal Justice System.
- **Education** – focussing on a number of specific areas, including exclusions, opportunities for BAME leadership and understanding more vulnerable groups further (those that are overrepresented in exclusions and low attainment).

7.5 Following the agreement of key priorities areas, leads have created sub-groups to facilitate work on key priorities. The workstream was paused due to staff re-deployment to manage the COVID-19 response.

7.6 Further work will be needed to draw the workstreams together into a multi-agency action plan which would then be overseen by the Race Equality Advisory Board identified in section 9. Timescales to be advised.

8. Linkages to other corporate plans and strategies and development of an overarching Equality and Equity Action

8.1 The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a number of commitments and ongoing pieces of work that are aimed at improving equality of opportunity, fostering good relations between diverse community groups and tackling inequality. These include:

- The Royal Borough of Greenwich Corporate Plan 2018-2022
- Greenwich Race Equality Scorecard (by the Runnymede Trust) and Race Equality Partnership
- The Social Mobility Delivery Plan
- The Greenwich Fairness Commission
- The Children and Young People's Plan
- Equality Objectives 2016-2020
- Workforce Development Strategy

8.2 The plans and strategies listed above are extensive and ambitious however there is an opportunity to illustrate more clearly the linkages between the plans and to explicitly draw out the interrelationships and dependencies to produce a focused Equality and Equity Action Plan. This would support both the delivery of the pledges made in the Equality and Equity Charter and also help embed Equality and Equity objectives deeper into service delivery. An officer working group has been established and Plan will be submitted to cabinet for November 2020 or December 2020.

8.3 The Equality element of the action plan will also reference the best practice factors referenced in the LGA's Equality Framework for Local Government with its focus on four areas of action:-

- Understanding and working with communities
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment
- Responsive Services and Customer Care
- Diverse and Engaged Workforce

9. Race Equality Advisory Board

9.1 The Council has responded to the social, economic and health disparities as evidenced by the impact on minorities of Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement by hosting a series of conversations, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities with Ethnic Minority led voluntary and community sector organisations.

9.2 This has resulted in two initial proposals to improve the ability of Black and Ethnic Minority led organisations to ensure their views are incorporated into the development of policy, services and analysis.

9.3 The first proposal relates to targeted support for BAME led VCS organisations to access funding and become more sustainable. As such funding has been approved via s106 to provide access to resources for

fundraising advice and bid writing support. An advertisement for a postholder is in development.

- 9.4 The second proposal relates to the establishment of clearer oversight and coordination of activity with regard to Race Equality. A councillor working group will be established alongside a Race Equality Advisory Board to offer the Cabinet Member insight and advice. The detailed operational arrangements for each group will be delegated to the Director of Communities and Environment.

10. **Available Options**

- 10.1 Option 1 – to agree the Equality and Equity Charter and the new Equality Objectives and associated actions including the establishment of a councillor working group and the Race Equality Advisory Board.

- 10.2 Option 2 – to do nothing.

11. **Preferred Option**

- 11.1 Option 1 is preferred.

12. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 12.1 Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:
- The Equality and Equity Charter has been developed following public and stakeholder consultation and support was overwhelmingly positive.
 - The 2016-2020 Equality Objectives are now out of date and councils have a statutory duty (the Public Sector Equality Duty) to develop new Equality Objectives every four years.

13. **Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision**

- 13.1 The officer Equality and Equity working group will continue to meet to develop the Equality and Equity Action Plan and develop partnership models for engaging with other key stakeholders who are essential to improving Equality and Equity outcomes in the borough. The intention is to bring an integrated initial Action Plan to cabinet in November or December 2020.

14. **Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Legal including Human Rights Act</p>	<p>The council’s equalities duties are set out in section 149 Equality Act 2010. This requires the council in exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conducted prohibited under the Act. 2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. 3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard in particular to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic 2. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. 3. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. 	<p>Azuka Onuorah Head of Legal Services 5th October 2020</p>

<p>Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet is asked to approve, agree and note point 1.1 to 1.8 in section 1 of this report.</p> <p>The preferred option is option 1, detailed in section 10.1.</p> <p>There are no Financial implications related to this report.</p>	<p>Kim Sullivan Head of Accountancy and Business Change, C&E, DRES, Finance & HSC.</p> <p>06/10/2020</p>
<p>Equalities</p>	<p>This report is submitted in support of the Royal Borough of Greenwich's commitment to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to pay due regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; (ii) Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and (iii) Foster good relations between people from different groups. <p>Part of our commitment to this is to produce four yearly objectives, which are specific and measurable.</p> <p>Approval of the new objectives following public and staff consultation will allow the Borough to address the needs of residents and staff with protected characteristics as well as to continue to evaluate our services and policies to</p>	<p>Takki Sulaiman Assistant Director Communities, Culture and Leisure</p> <p>30th September 2020</p>

	promote equity in terms of social and economic outcomes.	
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15. **Report Appendices**

15.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- *Appendix A: Headline Equality Measures list*
- *Appendix B: Equality Objectives 2016-2020*
- *Appendix C: Final Equality and Equity Charter*
- *Appendix D: Equality Consultation Analysis*
- *Appendix E: Final Equality Objectives and actions 2020-2024*

16. **Background Papers**

Scrutiny Papers: -

Headline Equality Measures 2018-19 report-

<https://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/937/Committee/87/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

External: -

Public Health England – [Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19](#) (June 2020)

LGA - The Equality Framework for Local Government -

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Equality%20Framework%20For%20Local%20Government%202020.pdf>

Runnymede Trust – [Greenwich Race Equality Scorecard](#) (November 2020)

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