

FOR PUBLICATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK – SELF ASSESSMENT **(S230)**

MEETING:	1. Customers and Communities and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	1. 10/04/14
REPORT BY:	POLICY MANAGER
WARD:	ALL
COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY:	ALL

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS:

- Peer Challenge report – achieving level
 - Narrative and self assessment – achieving level
 - Full self assessment – excellent level
- Documents are available from the Policy section – Town Hall room 1.13
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1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To self assess the Council's achievements against the Local Government Equalities Framework – excellent level.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council continues to progress towards the excellent level of the Local Government Equality Framework via self assessment.
- 2.2 That the Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy action plan is updated to include the areas identified for improvement in the excellent level self assessment.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2011 the Council was peer assessed against the Local Government Equality Framework achieving level. The Council was successful in meeting the criteria for the achieving level and started to move towards the highest level of the framework – excellent.

3.2 In March 2012 the Local Government Association re-launched the Local Government Equality Framework taking into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This new framework is a much tougher test with extended criteria requirements for all levels.

3.3 Since 2012/13 the Council has sought to consolidate performance at the now tougher achieving levels as well as make progress towards the excellent level.

4.0 **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EXCELLENT LEVEL**

4.1 The Equality Performance Management Group which includes representatives from all service areas have now completed the excellent level self assessment for the Council.

4.2 The excellent level of the framework is split into 28 different performance areas. Appendix A shows how the Council is currently performing against each performance criteria and the progress made since the last assessment in 2012/13. In 2012/13 the Council met or exceeded over 75% the criteria in 18 of the 28 performance areas. The latest self assessment identifies that over 75% of the criteria was met or exceeded in 26 of the 28 performance areas.

4.3 During 2013/14 several key programmes have contributed to meeting the criteria including:

- Are You Being Served and STAR Survey public satisfaction surveys and associated benchmarking
- Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum – taking a more pro-active approach in lobbying, improving accessibility of services and developing partnership based educational and promotional events
- Equality leadership – A range of successful activities during 2013/14 promoting the Council as a strong equalities advocate and leader
- The launch of Community Assemblies and community development activities
- Employee engagement initiatives have been strengthened significantly with best practice developed in Housing, Business Transformation and Leisure being utilised in other service areas. The commitment to undertake an annual employee surveys and a robust action plan are also a significant step.
- Learning, development and growing our own talent have taken significant strides during 2013/14 with the success of the project academy and launch of leadership training and mentoring.

4.4 Despite reaching above 75% compliance in all but two areas there are significant challenges in maintaining this performance in future years given the current and future financial difficulties the Council faces. In other areas

of the framework such as Communications the pressure is always on to respond to technology and social changes e.g. social media, website development etc. these areas often require significant human resources and financial investment just to maintain current performance levels.

5.0 **NEXT STEPS**

5.1 Through the self assessment programme a number of areas have been identified where improvement is needed to fully meet the excellent level criteria. Discussions are currently taking place around the most effective way to address these issues. In other areas the challenge for 2014/15 will be maintaining the strong performance in 2013/14.

5.2 The Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion action plan will be updated to reflect the challenges ahead for 2014/15 and that the appropriate level of equality analysis is undertaken on key discussions and where possible mitigating actions developed to reduce the negative impact on Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion issues.

6.0 **CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Risk Management – The Government have confirmed that the Equality Act will be reviewed again during 2015/16. During this period there may be significant changes in Equality legislative requirements.

6.2 Equalities – By working towards the excellent level of the local Government Equality Framework the Council is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion by going above and beyond minimum legal standards.

6.3 Financial – The revised action plan will be delivered within existing resources.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the Council continues to progress towards the excellent level of the Local Government Equality Framework via self assessment.

7.2 That the Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy action plan is updated to include the areas identified for improvement in the excellent level self assessment.

8.0 **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To deliver our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion and improve knowledge and understanding these issues.

D. REDDISH
POLICY MANAGER

Further information on this matter can be obtained from Donna Reddish (Extension 5307).

Officer recommendation supported/not supported/modified as below or Executive Members' recommendation/comments if no Officer recommendation.

Signed

Executive Member

Date

Consultee Executive Member/Assistant Executive Member comments (if applicable)