

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 11/10/2021

Subject: Our Equalities Plan 2021-2025 means business

Report of: Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader

Report author: Yvonne Okiyo, Business Partner Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Responsible Director: Rhian Davies, Director of Resources

SUMMARY

The Council is committed to making Hammersmith & Fulham one of the most inclusive boroughs in the country; a place where everyone feels valued and residents have equal access to the opportunities our borough offers.

This report is seeking approval of Our Equalities Plan 2021 – 2025 means business which sets out our approach to delivering the Council’s vision for tackling inequality. The plan identifies five objectives for tackling inequality:

- Everyone in our borough feels valued and they belong
 - Removing barriers to inclusion
 - Ensuring that our services tackle the disproportionate impact on young people (including those at the risks of street crime and exploitation by gangs)
 - Improving opportunities for all
 - Becoming an employer of choice and fostering greater inclusion.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Carefully considers all responses to the consultation on the draft Equalities Plan, attached at Appendix 2.
 2. Approves and adopts the Equalities Plan 2021-25 and equalities objectives consulted as attached at Appendix 1.
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Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The proposals in the report will enhance understanding and commitment to inclusion for

	employers and borough businesses as well as support building an inclusive economy.
Creating a compassionate council	The draft Equality objective focusing on 'Everyone in our Borough feels valued and that they belong' is apt here.
Doing things with residents, not to them	<p>This plan is 'Doing things with residents and not to them'. A key element of the Equalities Plan focuses on Co-production. We will work in collaboration with residents to remove barriers to inclusion by designing services, policies, and strategies with those they will impact the most.</p> <p>The plan is applicable across the borough and is intended to benefit all our residents, communities and staff, and thereby all who live and/or work in the borough or work directly with Hammersmith & Fulham's (H&F) residents and communities.</p>
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed Equalities Plan.
Taking pride in H&F	The proposals in the report will help tackle pride in H&F as the Council seeks to deliver environmental improvements and continues to tackle crime and promote community cohesion.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The proposals in the report will aid understanding of any disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications.

The Equalities Plan will be published in an electronic format and will not incur a publication cost to the Council.

The Plan 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 within the Resources Department. Any detailed actions arising from the Plan which cannot be contained within existing budgets will be the subject of future decision reports to agree any additional investment or funding.

Legal Implications

Regulation 2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 sets out that the Council must publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the duty imposed by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), not later than 31st January 2012; and subsequently at intervals of not greater than one year beginning with the date of last publication. The information which the Council publishes must include information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are:

- (a) its employees.
- (b) other persons affected by its policies and practices.

Regulation 3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 sets out that the Council is required to publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve to do any of the things mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 149 of the Act referenced. The objectives must be published at intervals of not greater than four years beginning with the date of last publication.

An objective published by a public authority in compliance with paragraph (1) must be specific and measurable and must be published in such a manner that the information is accessible to the public.

Section 149(1) (a) to (c) sets out the public sector equality duty with which the Council is required to comply. A public authority must, in the exercise of its, have due regard to the need to:

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Plan will help the Council meet the PSED thus minimising the likelihood of a successful legal challenge on this.

Contact Officers

Name: Yvonne Okiyo
Position: Business Partner Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Telephone: 07824 836 012
Email: Yvonne.Okiyo@lbhf.gov.uk

Name: Dawn Auger
Position: Assistant Director Transformation, Talent, and Inclusion
Email: Dawn.Aunger@lbhf.gov.uk

Name: Andre Mark
Position: Finance Business Partner
Telephone: 020 8753 6729
Email: andre.mark@lbhf.gov.uk
Verified by Emily Hill, Director of Finance

Name: Grant Deg
Position: Chief Solicitor, Litigation and Employment
Telephone: 07798588766
Email: grant.deg@lbhf.gov.uk

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report - none

Background

1. In 2017 H&F committed to co-producing policies and services with residents. Key to implementing and delivering the Plan will be developing policies and processes that really go to the heart of the barriers that our residents face and together we can address them.
2. The Plan will drive an approach to deliver the Council's vision for tackling inequality. Adoption of the Plan will result in measurable benefits for staff, residents, and communities across the Borough.
3. Key to delivering this Plan will be aligning resources to deliver positive outcomes, as far as is practicable. We have been mindful in developing this plan to ensure it aligns with existing commitments whilst remaining ambitious - within existing resources, projects, programmes, and actions.

Consultation responses

4. A 14-week public consultation took place from 1 February 2021 to 14 May 2021. The consultation was promoted via citizen space, social media platforms and the weekly H&F newsletter. 90 resident responses were received and analysed to inform the final Plan.
5. The Council has incorporated feedback from the public consultation in the final Plan. This has been summarised below:
 - **Amending Objective 1** from 'Everyone in our Borough feels valued when the pandemic ends' to '**Everyone in our Borough feels valued and they belong**'. Incorporating feedback that the previous objective was not practical, and issues need to be brought to the forefront now. Officers advise that we should be working towards creating a Borough where all residents feel valued and they belong irrespective of pandemic.
 - **Amending Objective 3** from 'Ensuring our services tackle the disproportionate impact on young people including those at risk of street crime and exploitation by gangs' to '**Ensuring our services tackle the disproportionate impact on young people (including those at risk of street crime and exploitation by gangs)**'. This incorporates from the public consultation around wider issues,

challenges and barriers young people face. Officers advise that this objective needs to be more holistic and take into account social and economic impact on key areas of life on young people such as educational achievement, child poverty, employment and mental health.

- **Added section on how we will Measure Progress:** Incorporated feedback to monitoring, reporting and review progress and publish information pertaining to this. Officers advise adding a new section on how we will measure progress on delivery of the plan and evidence equality outcomes for residents. We need to be open, transparent, and held accountable.
- **Objective 1. Everyone in our borough feels valued and they belong:** Incorporated feedback to ensure this also considers how we tackle social and economic deprivation and abuse/discrimination faced by all groups that share protected characteristics.
- **Objective 2. Removing barriers to inclusion:** Incorporated feedback that this requires an intersectional approach, looking at protected groups impacted the most, examining access in relation to language and using digital technology as an enabler.
- **Objective 3. Ensuring our services tackle the disproportionate impact on young people (including those at risk of street crime and exploitation by gangs):** Incorporated feedback to include building economic capacity amongst young people – education, skills, and training as well as undertaking a public health approach to tackle the root causes of youth crime.
- **Objective 5. Becoming an employer of choice and fostering greater inclusion:** Incorporated feedback which will see the Council working towards a workforce that reflects the Borough's diversity and in particular underrepresented groups at all levels.

Reasons for Decision

6. Under the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties), local authorities are required to annually publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This information must relate to people who are affected by the Council's policies and practices such as service users and employees. They are also required to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.
7. Through effective adoption of a consistent equalities approach, measurable positive outcomes can be achieved for and with our residents, communities, and staff, which are directly linked to our key strategic priorities.

Equality Implications

8. The Plan seeks to understand the issues and challenges faced by the people of Hammersmith & Fulham to create a place of opportunity where everyone can belong, addressing the needs and aspirations of all those who live and work in the borough.
9. The Plan sets out the Council's Equality objectives 2021-2025. This will help the Council meet the PSED in full, along with the approach to monitor its success and deliverability meets Section 153 of the Act, thus minimising any reason or likelihood of a successful legal challenge on this.
10. A 14-week consultation took place between 1 February 2021 and 14 May 2021 with H&F residents and council staff (90 responses), thereby ensuring the Council is meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, its commitment to co-production and 'doing things with residents and not to them'. There was overwhelming support for the five draft objectives. Asked if they were the right objective (offering 'yes', 'no' and 'don't know/no opinion'), the percentage of respondents selecting 'yes' ranged from 72% - 91%.
11. This Plan will have a positive impact on all groups that share protected characteristics as it seeks to address inequalities faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in the Borough.
12. The Plan was developed against a backdrop of prevalent international and national themes. The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on inequalities of both deprivation and people from Black and Asian communities. Not only on health inequalities it has raised the lack of trust and racism in those communities, which goes back several decades.

Risk Management Implications

13. The risk of not adopting the Plan could mean that the Council and its partners fail to meet the needs of our staff and residents which could have a direct impact on their life prospects and opportunities to achieve positive outcomes.
14. Failure to implement and annually report on the Council's equality and inclusion priorities 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.

*Implications verified/completed by: Ray Chitty, Head of Insurance,
07739315565*

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

15. The proposals in the Plan will aid understanding of any disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities. We will ensure services identify opportunities to tackle inequality from climate action.

Implications verified by: Hinesh Mehta, Strategic Lead, 0208 753 6703

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Equalities Plan 2021-2025

Appendix 2 – Consultation responses Draft Equalities Plan 2021 -2025