

<b>Cabinet Decision</b> 3 December 2014	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Steve Halsey, Head of Paid Service	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Tower Hamlets Single Equality Framework 2014/15</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Aminur Khan, Cabinet Member for Policy, Strategy and Performance
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Louise Russell, Service Head Strategy and Equality
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	One Tower Hamlets
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes

### Executive Summary

This report presents Cabinet with the council's Single Equality Framework (SEF) for 2014/15 (Appendix 1). The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for promoting diversity and equality and helps the organisation achieve the vision of One Tower Hamlets. The core function of the SEF is to prioritise equality outcomes that require intervention at a strategic level and ensure that we have the plans and strategies to deliver our vision. The SEF pulls together an ambitious programme of equalities work across the council, including:

- The actions in place to deliver our equality priorities for 2014-15 and to respond to recommendations in our assessment under the Equality Framework for Local Government
- The organisation's response to the requirements of the Equality Act (2010)
- The council's activities to develop a workforce which reflects the community

### Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

Agree the Tower Hamlets Single Equality framework 2014/15

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 To Agree the council's Single Equality Framework. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council to publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty. This compliance is demonstrated in the Single Equality Framework.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The council has a legal duty to publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with Equality Act 2010 and this is demonstrated in the Single Equality Framework. There are alternative ways of meeting this duty - for example, developing a council wide Equality Plan which is not integrated with the Strategic Plan. However, there are strong reasons for integrating equality within our approach to business planning and this approach has been recognised as good practice by independent peers.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for understanding diversity, tackling inequality and promoting cohesion. Integrated into the Strategic Plan, the SEF provides the strategic direction for the council's work on equality and enables the organisation to better meet the financial, policy and social challenges that we face today. It embraces the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and sets out the organisation's Strategic Equality priorities.
- 3.2 The SEF provides a mechanism for the identification and monitoring of a focused set of strategic level equality priorities across the council to respond to areas of persistent inequality.
- 3.3 To ensure that we are able to track performance against our equality objectives for 2014/15 we have identified a set of equality performance measures and these are incorporated in to the Strategic Plan 2014/15. These include existing performance measures that relate to equality and measures which will be disaggregated by specific equality strands where we need to narrow the gap in terms of outcomes for specific groups.
- 3.4 All equality priorities are set out in the SEF. In addition, we have identified a set of existing performance measures which will be disaggregated by the relevant equality groups to enable us to monitor outcomes for these groups. Being able to track whether overall improvements are also narrowing the gap in outcomes for different groups will in turn inform future business planning. This approach also demonstrates that we are meeting the requirements of the PSED.
- 3.5 In early 2013 we developed a Borough Equality Assessment (Appendix 2), a document which summarises what we know about age, disability, gender,

race, religion/belief and sexual orientation inequality in the borough. This document replaces the six Equality Schemes which were produced in 2010 and contained action plans which ran to 2013. This document was used to develop Strategic Plan priorities and actions for 2014-15, enabling us to further embed intelligence about inequality in the borough into our corporate planning framework.

### **Key Achievements in 2013-14**

3.6 In March 2014 Tower Hamlets council was successfully re-assessed against the criteria for the 'excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. Key findings from the comprehensive peer review (Appendix 3) highlighted that:

- The council has built on experience and expertise in tackling inequality since the previous assessment in 2010, and has adapted methods and structures to address the new challenges that it faces. The council continues to focus its resources on improving outcomes for its most vulnerable communities, with equality underpinning the council's work with partners and stakeholders.
- Strong political and managerial leadership on equalities permeates Tower Hamlets council. This appears to instil confidence across the organisation and staff have a clear understanding of equality, and how it can be used as a key driver for delivering improvements in the borough.
- There is evidence of nuanced and sophisticated partnership working, on areas such as hate crime and managing community tensions, which are clearly having a significant positive effect in the ability of the council to respond quickly to situations as they arise.
- The council has good quality up to date information about the demographics of its local communities and uses its diverse workforce to enrich this data, enabling it to build up a sophisticated and up to date picture of the local area.
- The council uses commissioning and procurement to significant effect as a means of delivering on local equality and economic objectives. In order to get better value for money, its procurement strategy links equalities into the organisation's corporate vision and objectives, and opportunities to obtain wider (community) benefits when procuring have been identified and pursued.

3.7 The Equality Framework for Local Government review also highlighted some examples of activities the council undertakes that make it an 'Excellent' organisation in regards to equality. Examples included:

- Throughout 2013/14 the Local Voices project has supported local disabled people to participate in workshops, discussions groups, community activities, events, surveys and social media activity to address their

concerns and issues. The project was supervised by a steering group of eight local disabled people with a mixture of impairments, ages, ethnicities and genders. Participants in the project are helping the council involve more disabled people in decision making and designing services.

- In 2013 Tower Hamlets Council in partnership with the East London Foundation Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group won a Local Government Chronicle Award for the work on 'Improving Pathways for People with Dementia and their Carers'. The award was given in recognition of partnership working across organisations resulting in significant improvements for people with dementia and their carers.

3.8 The council's Borough Equality Assessment provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment provides an evidence base for the Single Equality Framework and informs service planning across the Council to ensure the council takes full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services. Some of the key achievements against the Borough Equality Assessment for 2013/14 include:

#### ***A Prosperous Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Continued to narrow the gap between the Tower Hamlets employment rate and the London average
- Supported more than 750 residents into sustainable jobs through employment and skills programmes
- Helped 200 residents into apprenticeships
- Become an accredited London Living Wage (LLW) employer– which means that the council will pay its staff a minimum of the LLW - £8.80 per hour

Over the past year:

- Local primary school children performed better than the national average at Key Stage 2, and results are on course to improve further in 2014
- GCSE results further improved in 2013 with 65% of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at A\*-C including English and Maths, beating the national average again
- The borough's schools were judged to be amongst 'the best urban schools in the world' by academics from the Institute of Education
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced further to less than 4.6%

### ***A Great Place to Live***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Supported the delivery of a further 581 affordable homes, bringing the total delivered since 2010 to 4029
- Held four energy auctions with more than 4,000 residents signed up to the Energy Co-operative, saving an average of £150 on their annual energy bill.

### ***Safe and Cohesive community***

Over the past year:

- The overall level of crime has reduced
- The percentage of local residents feeling this is a place where people from different communities get on well together has increased year on year to 81%

### ***A Healthy Community***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Further reduced the teenage pregnancy rate
- Maintained free home care services for older people and disabled adults
- Ensured that Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board was the first in the UK to sign the Time to Change pledge, challenging mental health stigma and discrimination

### ***One Tower Hamlets***

Over the past year, the council has:

- Increased the proportion of BME and disabled staff employed in senior positions in the Council

3.9 In 2012 the Mayor launched the Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission to address issues of inequality and fairness within an environment of diminishing public sector resources, and make recommendations on how the Council and local partners could work together to continue to reduce inequality.

3.10 The Fairness Commission reported in September 2013, making recommendations relating to three key themes; money and financial inclusion, employment and housing.

3.11 The council and partners have made significant progress in delivering the actions outlined in the report to tackle inequality, including:

- Recommendation 2: “Tower Hamlets becomes an online borough” , towards which the Council and Partners are delivering events for UK

Go Online week for the first time, alongside the creation of a Partnership Strategy and Action Plan.

- Recommendation 8: “Reimagine local employment services so they work better for local people and businesses”, towards which the Council has reached agreement with Job Centre Plus on a Memorandum of Understanding and is developing a shared system for supporting residents into employment and monitoring their progress.
- Recommendation 16: “That the standard of private rented accommodation is improved, and tenants better protected, through a landlord licensing scheme for Tower Hamlets”, towards which Cabinet agreed in September to develop the evidence base required to implement the scheme.

- 3.12 A one year progress report was considered by Cabinet on 5 November 2014 which provided an update on the progress made on all Fairness commission recommendations

### **The Single Equality Framework 2014/15**

- 3.13 The SEF sets out our approach to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine separate pieces of legislation to simplify the law and help people understand it better and tackle discrimination more effectively. The Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011 and is aimed to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of all public bodies. Based on an understanding of the ‘protected characteristics’ (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation), public bodies should have ‘due regard’ to the general duty under Section 149(1) of the Act to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

- 3.14 To demonstrate ‘due regard’ there are two specific duties which are designed to help public bodies meet the general duty, these are to:

- Publish information showing that they have complied with the general duty
- Prepare and publish equality objectives

- 3.15 The SEF describes the work of the current Mayor in strengthening work on delivering One Tower Hamlets, including the embedding of equality

considerations into medium term financial planning and providing a single figurehead to engage and represent our diverse communities. It also sets out the Council’s key priorities of:

- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Bringing diverse communities together
- Building a workforce that reflects the community

3.16 There is a commitment within the Community and Strategic Plans to continue to build One Tower Hamlets. The Single Equality Framework sits at the heart of the work to tackle inequality by taking a comprehensive look across all objectives and priorities and putting measures in place to improve equality across outcomes. Other key priorities include a renewed focus on enabling residents to voice their concerns, improve cohesion through regular community events that celebrate the diversity of the borough and ensure the council has a zero tolerance policy on hate crime. To achieve these priorities the council is looking to expand the community champions roles to further build community leadership and bring diverse voices to the fore to ensure all groups have an opportunity to participate. There is also a greater focus on the celebration of One Tower Hamlets using culture as a key driver to take this work forward. For example the culture service is currently developing a series of activities/ messages to be developed that culminate in a celebratory event “World Food Day”.

**Monitoring the Single Equality Framework 2014/15**

3.17 Progress on activities within the SEF are monitored through the regular Strategic Plan monitoring.

3.18 The 2013/14 monitoring data has been considered by the Tower Hamlets Equality Steering Group (THESG) which has identified a set of performance measures requiring particular focus in 2014/15, where there is a particular disparity in performance in relation to specific Protected Characteristics. THESG agreed the below measures will be focused on throughout 2014/15. The role of THESG will be to consider proposed activity and assist in identifying further opportunities for activity on a council wide basis to enable the gap to be further closed.

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>SEF Measure</b>	<b>13/14 Performance</b>
DR	Employment rate (gap v London)	Strategic Plan Target 13/14: 6.3% Overall Performance for 13/14: 3.9% Performance for Women 13/14: 8.4% Performance for BAME 13/14: 10.9%
CLC	Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Strategic Plan Target: 4.5% Overall performance for 13/14: 4.5% Performance for White British:12.7%
ESCW	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at	Strategic Plan Target 13/14: 65% Overall Performance for 13/14:

	GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	64.7% Performance for White British boys and Girls:46.7%/45.9%
Resources/LPG	Proportion of staff that are LP07 or above who are from an ethnic minority, Female , Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target for the proportion of LP07+ staff who are BME of 30% has not been met, however the minimum standard has been achieved.</li> <li>• There is a slight under-representation of females who are LP07+, the target of 50% has not been met.</li> <li>• The target for the proportion of LP07+ staff who have a disability has been achieved – however, 11.5% of the LP07+ cohort did not answer the question on their disability status.</li> </ul>
Public Health	Childhood Obesity	Between 2006/07 to 2008/09 the increase in the level of obesity in 10-11 year olds in Tower Hamlets was amongst the highest in the country. Analysis of national and local data showed that this was mainly driven by a rapid increase in levels of obesity in Bangladeshi boys (seen both within Tower Hamlets and nationally)

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 This report presents the Council's draft Single Equality Framework (SEF) Action Plan for 2014/15.
- 4.2 Equalities issues should be embedded into service delivery and financial implications incorporated into budgets as part of the normal budget setting process. There are no additional financial implications arising from adopting the Single Equality Framework 2014-15. However, if additional costs arise from implementing the Plan, they will either need to be contained within existing revenue budget provisions in directorates or separate approval sought.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Council is subject to a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to eliminate unlawful

conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (the public sector equality duty).

- 5.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 Regulations issued pursuant to the Equality Act require the Council to publish information at least annually to demonstrate compliance with the general duty. The Council is also required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 to prepare and publish one or more objectives which it thinks it should achieve in order to: eliminate discriminate and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups. The objectives must be specific and measurable. The Council has an ongoing duty to review and publish its objectives at intervals of not greater than four years, beginning with the date of last publication.
- 5.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published guidance in relation to the public sector equality duty. This includes specific guidance on the purpose of equality objectives and how to go about setting them. Whilst the Council is not legally obliged to follow the EHRC guidance, it sets out good practice for authorities to follow. Without attempting to repeat the whole of the guidance, some key elements are –
- Proportionality. The number of objectives and the level of ambition should reflect the Council's size and diversity of functions.
  - Business planning. The objectives should be seen as part of the Council's business plan and as supporting its delivery.
  - Engagement. The Council should engage with the public, the voluntary sector and staff when setting objectives and should make full use of available equality data.
- 5.4 The objectives proposed in the Single Equality Framework appear to have been prepared in accordance with the EHRC guidance.
- 5.5 The objectives in the Single Equality Framework are closely aligned with objectives in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, which contains the Council's sustainable community strategy for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. The objectives appear capable of being carried out within the Council's statutory functions, but it will be for officers to ensure this is the case.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 This report presents MAB with the council's draft Single Equality Framework (SEF) for 2014/15 (Appendix 1). The SEF is the council's corporate strategy for promoting diversity and equality and helps the organisation achieve the vision of One Tower Hamlets. The core function of the SEF is to prioritise equality outcomes that require intervention at a strategic level and ensure that we have the plans and strategies to deliver our vision.

- 6.2 Under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, the council is required to prepare and publish one or more objectives which it thinks it should achieve in order to: eliminate discrimination and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups. The objectives must be specific and measurable.
- 6.3 The council's Borough Equality Assessment provides an account of inequality in the borough. The Assessment brings together the latest evidence on age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief equality, sexual orientation and transgender inequality in the borough. Produced through engagement with services, residents, community groups and partners the Assessment provides an evidence base for the Single Equality Framework and informs service planning across the Council to ensure the council takes full account of the borough's diversity in planning and designing services. It also provides a robust evidence base for equality objectives that are specific and measurable.
- 6.4 Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission states that equality objectives should have the below elements:
- Proportionality. The number of objectives and the level of ambition should reflect the Council's size and diversity of functions.
  - Business planning. The objectives should be seen as part of the Council's business plan and as supporting its delivery.
  - Engagement. The Council should engage with the public, the voluntary sector and staff when setting objectives and should make full use of available equality data.
- 6.5 The objectives proposed in the Single Equality Framework have used the above principles as a structure to develop equality objectives and actions.

## **7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

7.1 N/A

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. The Single Equality Framework ensures the council meets the obligations of the Single Equality Framework and mitigates against the risk that we discriminate against any element of the community.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Single Equality Framework contains an action plan which would reduce crime and disorder through promoting community safety and community cohesion.

## **10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

10.1 The approach of integrating equality within the council's business planning provides an efficient method of ensuring that equality is at the heart of the

council's strategic and resource planning processes, including how we allocate resources to key priorities.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

NONE

### **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** Single Equality Framework 2014/15

**Appendix 2** Borough Equality Assessment 2014/15

**Appendix 3** Equality Framework for Local Government Peer Review 2014

### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

NONE

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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