

Committee Overview and Scrutiny	Date 7th July 2010	Classification Unrestricted	Report No	Agenda Item No 7.1
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive		Title: Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2009/2010 – end of year monitoring report		
Originating Officer(s) Frances Jones & Hafsha Ali Acting Service Heads, Scrutiny and Equalities		Wards affected All		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This end of year monitoring report informs the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's progress in implementing its Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP) for 2009/10. A full progress report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report also includes an annual summary of progress against the Council's Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion/Belief, and Sexual Orientation Equality Schemes in 2009/10.
- 1.3 The monitoring is not recorded for the first Disability Equality Scheme (DES) 2007/10 as the final monitoring was completed in December 2009. The DES has been refreshed for 2010/13 and all future monitoring of this has been brought in line with all our other Equality Schemes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the end of year progress in implementing the Council's Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2009/10, as set out in Appendix 1, and the Age, Gender, Religion and Belief, Race and Sexual Orientation Equality Schemes monitoring report, as set out in Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Tower Hamlets Council has placed diversity and equality at the core of its functions and is committed to maintaining the very highest level of equalities practice both in relation to employment and service provision. In January 2010 the Council was the second Council nationally to be externally validated as being at the highest level, Excellent, of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), which replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). The Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP) remains an essential vehicle for maintaining this performance across all six equalities strands.
- 3.2 The DEAP pulls together the strategic level equalities activities across the Council. It reflects the work required to maintain the highest level of practice, the actions needed to mainstream community cohesion throughout the Council's services and the implementation of the Council's Race Equality, Disability Equality, Gender Equality, Sexual Orientation Equality, Religion and Belief Equality and Age Equality Schemes.
- 3.3 The 2009/10 Diversity and Equality Action Plan focused on five overarching strategic objectives, identified through an analysis of evidence collected during the refresh of the Community Plan and an assessment of service performance in priority equalities areas. These objectives were:
- 1 Tackle worklessness and economic inactivity among target groups
 - 2 Improve educational achievement for target groups
 - 3 Improve housing provision for target groups
 - 4 Strengthen cohesion between communities and individuals
 - 5 Improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities in health
- 3.4 In April 2009 the Race Equality Scheme was refreshed and three new Schemes for Age, Religion/Belief and Sexual Orientation were introduced. These were designed to make explicit our work across the six individual strands. The combined outcomes of the individual Schemes are designed to present a stronger overarching DEAP which will be further supplemented in 2010/11 by our local Single Equality Framework. This report also contains the final monitoring of the Disability Equality Scheme, 2007-10. In April 2010, this Scheme was refreshed and the new Scheme lays out the Council's work regarding disability for the next three years.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2009/10 AND CHALLENGES FOR 2010/11

- 1 In January 2010 the Council was the second Council nationally to be externally validated as being at the highest level, **Excellent**, of the **Equality Framework for Local Government** (EFLG), which replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). The Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP) remains an essential vehicle for maintaining this performance across all six equalities strands.
- 2 The **Tower Hamlets Pan Disability Panel** has been designed and launched to involve disabled people in decision making and scrutiny of the Partnership's services and policies. An enrolment day was held in November attended by a range of disabled residents and third sector organisations keen to become active members of the Panel. A total of forty residents signed up to join the Panel.

- 3 Following an extensive consultation, the LGBT Community Forum was re-launched in October 2009. As the Forum has developed it has re-named itself ***Rainbow Hamlets***. It is designed to improve consultation between the LGBT communities of Tower Hamlets and the Council and its partners. It also allows the LGBT communities to be actively involved in the monitoring and delivery of the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme.
- 4 A wide range of ***community and art events*** have been held throughout the year which celebrate and raise awareness of the rich diversity of our communities. These have included: Black History Month, Getting Around and Getting Involved and London Week of Peace.
- 5 Praxis have been commissioned to coordinate the ***New Residents and Refugee Forum*** to strengthen the capacity of decision makers and service providers to understand, involve, and respond to the needs of new communities at a strategic and operational level. Three very successful seminars have now been held focusing on homelessness, access to health services and responding to the needs of people with No Recourse to Public Funds. With wide partner engagement these have highlighted the respective roles of the statutory and third sector agencies and thereby offer the potential for improved coordination of local delivery.
- 6 A review of ***Translation & Interpretation services*** has been completed and this included an Equality Impact Assessment of this area of work. A new policy has been agreed that seeks to ensure that the needs of newer communities and residents who have sensory or literacy difficulties are met within new service arrangements. The review concentrated on the following areas – needs, policy, provision and management arrangements. It is intended to initiate a procurement process through which service improvements will be progressed.

5. DIRECTORATE MONITORING

5.1 Adults Health and Wellbeing (AHWB)

Throughout 2009/10 we have continued our work to support some of the most vulnerable people in the borough. Key achievements within AHWB over the past year include the launch of the reablement service as part of the integrated care pilot. This service is seen as one of the key components for ensuring people are empowered to remain independent within their own homes. Initial indications suggest that recipients of the six week short term intensive support programme (who would have previously received traditional homecare) enjoy increased independence as a result. The development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in partnership with NHS Tower Hamlets is another key achievement. The JSNA provides a rich evidence base on key groups within our communities and their needs and aspirations. In 2009/10 this work has included a focus on people with learning disabilities, a group at risk of marginalisation and social exclusion. Analysis of relevant data and evidence led to a number of recommendations for further work to be undertaken to improve the life chances of this group. This work will be undertaken through the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and other key stakeholders.

5.1.1 Looking ahead to 2010/11, the final year of a three year programme Transforming Adult Social Care, work is continuing to ensure equalities is embedded in everything we do. At the heart of the Transformation programme is a commitment to putting people in control of their own care, through mechanisms such as the Personal Budget and greater emphasis on person centered approaches. In short, the personalisation agenda provides an opportunity to fundamentally alter the relationship between people and public services. We are shifting the balance from a system where 'passive clients' receive 'care' to active citizens shaping their own package of support, enabling them to live independent and fulfilling lives. The transformation agenda offers huge benefits to all adults in the community accessing support, particularly those from more vulnerable or marginalised sections of society. A vision of what the system will look like in practice is shared by the local authority, NHS and a range of stakeholders. Mechanisms are being developed this year to turn the vision into a reality, which include:

- 1 Enabling people to 'self assess' their own support needs at local access points (with assistance if required):
- 2 Offering those with critical or substantial needs targeted Short Term Intensive Support; and;
- 3 Empowering those requiring on-going state funded support via a Personal Budget to allow them to self-direct their own support.

5.2 Children, Schools and Families (CSF)

5.2.1 CSF have continued to make excellent progress around equalities during 2009/10. As well as positively supporting and supplying evidence for the 'Excellent' level of the 'Equality Framework for Local Government' the directorate has continued to support young people and their families as well as schools across the Borough. The directorate has worked hard around workforce development during 2009/10. The autumn report of the staff equality audit indicates that 29.4% of teachers are from BME backgrounds, just short of the target. A targeted campaign was undertaken with the Somali community and one Somali person is applying for the Graduate Teacher Programme. This is a positive step in the workforce reflecting the community agenda.

5.2.2 The Youth Service has continued to empower young people and have put a number of positive projects in place to explore the barriers preventing diverse communities mixing in youth clubs and day centres. This work has produced positive outcomes and the Youth Service has seen an increase in the number of young people engaging with their services. A briefing session was held with named coordinators of racist incidents and schools were encouraged to report all forms of discrimination. Across schools, all reported cases of discrimination, including homophobic bullying, are now investigated. The number of discriminatory incidents reported within schools for the 2009/10 academic year fell by 3.7%, and 22 incidents of homophobic bullying were reported.

5.2.2 A great deal of work has been undertaken within schools around bullying. The 'No Outsiders' project has started in 3 schools with a further 3 schools planning to become involved. Within the Youth Service leisure activities have been developed for girls and young women from different ethnic backgrounds to participate in joint activities and build cohesion in the Borough. A range of actions are in place through

the Enjoy and Achieve section of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to improve GCSE results to be the best in the country. These actions are having positive results in terms of attainment and we hope for further improvements during 2010/11.

- 5.2.3 Pilot projects underway with schools to provide increased and improved walking and cycling routes. This work will link in with the obesity strategy being worked on during 2010/11 as part of the Child Poverty Strategy. A range of activities are in place through the Achieve Economic Wellbeing section of the CYPP to reduce levels of youth unemployment.
- 5.2.4 Looking ahead, we are keen to improve further on our equalities work and produce even more positive outcomes for children and their families in the borough. Our aim is to embed equalities into everything we do. We hope the new Family Well Being model will act as driver for service improvement and will have equalities at its heart. We aim to build on the good work around monitoring discriminatory incidents in schools by rolling out the methodology as 'best practice' across all settings within the directorate. This work will be shared with colleagues corporately who work around community cohesion.
- 5.2.5 Part of the Children, School's and Families directorates approach to tackling homophobic bullying in schools has been to support the "No Outsiders Project", which has been running in 6 Tower Hamlets schools.

The "No Outsiders Project" started out as a national research project based in UK primary schools and ended in March 2009. During the course of the project, researchers and teachers developed strategies and resources to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality.

The Tower Hamlets schools that are currently involved in the project are supported by a diversity consultant who has been working very closely with the schools leadership teams and staff to mainstream LGBT equality. Examples of the work undertaken thus far include INSET days for school staff, embedding of LGBT into the curriculum/schemes of work and the purchasing of teaching and learning resources. In addition, the Schools Library Service has been resourced with teaching and learning materials that can be borrowed by school staff.

Furthermore, copies of an anti-bullying leaflet have been produced for young people in schools and a poster advising school staff on how to tackle homophobic bullying has been drafted and is ready for publication. Also, at the recent Children, Schools and Families Directorates Workforce Development Conference, a series of workshops were organised for staff on dealing with homophobic bullying. The current template for Discriminatory Incidents within schools has been revised by the Equalities Team and includes sections on homophobic bullying.

Later in the year, a number of workshops will be set up for head teachers from across the borough to discuss issues of homophobic bullying.

5.3 Communities, Localities and Culture (CLC)

- 5.3.1 The Directorate of CLC covers twenty two separate and widely differing service areas, many of which contain multiple front-line services. Almost all of the Council's universal services are delivered through this Directorate and it provides those

services that everyone depends upon as they go about their daily lives. To CLC, this means that equalities is a vital, integral component that dictates how we work as an organisation, and with our partners, to deliver to the needs and requirements of our residents and visitors, on behalf of the Council and our leadership.

Key achievements over the past year have included:

- 1 A joint event combining the International Day of Disabled People and the 'Getting Around' disability accessibility and mobility day held in September, with over 120 disabled participants;
- 2 Leading a disability employment initiative, in partnership with the third sector, which has seen numerous unpaid work placements and paid employment outcomes for young disabled people living in the Borough, particularly with our contract partners GLL and Veolia;
- 3 Delivery of an initiative to get local women trained as pool lifeguards, in partnership with GLL and the third sector, to encourage physical activity and employment in this under-represented group;
- 4 Successfully delivering the participatory budgeting pilot, this empowered local people through LAPs in the innovative 'You Decide!' programme. This has increased the extent to which local people are involved in making decisions and allocating funding to improve services in their areas. More than £2million of Council funds has been shared out in this programme among each of the 8 LAPs to be used to 'buy' additional services voted on at public meetings by residents within that LAP area;
- 5 A comprehensive review and update of the Idea Stores Strategy improves on the Borough's excellent record of engagement in libraries and lifelong learning, linking the current service with health and employment provision, and actively sought the views of older residents as well as the Bangladeshi community; and
- 6 Strategic development of a Leisure Facilities Strategy incorporated the views and needs of residents, and provides an overall decision-making framework for potential future investment in the Council's leisure facilities over the coming ten years. In particular, the strategy identifies gaps in current and future provision; and assesses the quality, suitability, utilisation and efficiency of existing leisure facilities, with particular reference to residents' different gender, cultural, religious and physical needs.

5.3.2 Over the next year, CLC will continue to improve inclusive dialogue through the localisation of services with our key partners. We will be continuing to promote cohesion and raising awareness with our award-winning 'No Place for Hate' campaign, ensuring support and protection for all communities through Champions Projects and developing mechanisms for involving faith leaders in restorative justice activities. We will continue to deliver a programme of arts and events that celebrates the diversity of Tower Hamlets and makes such a major contribution to community cohesion in the Borough. Delivery of Community Safety initiatives remains a primary objective, and will include expanding THEOs from 16 to 21, continued development of SNTs, facilitating extra policing activity with £280,000 of Participatory Budgeting funding, and comprehensive reviews of the Drug Strategy and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan.

5.3.3 The 2012 Olympics will bring a great boost to the local economy both during the construction phase and during the event itself. It will put our diverse community at

the heart of a wonderful world celebration. However there are very significant practical challenges posed by the Olympics for the Borough and from December 2009 CLC have been tasked with leading the planning to meet these challenges. The Directorate will be working to ensure that the Olympic and Paralympic Games are used effectively to engage communities in cultural, sporting and celebratory events. In 2010 this will focus on work around the potential for an Olympic Live Site in Victoria Park and the further development of the Paradise Gardens Major Community Event in June and the field day under age event in August. We will also be engaging in dialogue with LOCOG to determine the extent nature of 'games time' venues within the Borough and the basis upon which they might be used.

5.4 Resources

- 5.4.1 One of the key focuses of the Council is to improve the under-representation of BME communities in key employment sectors. To achieve this aim the Council has promoted activities and developed activities in partnership with local organisations. The 'You're Hired!' Job fair in October was such a partnership event, organised in conjunction with the Job Centre and NHS Tower Hamlets and taking place in Canary Wharf. This high-profile event was attended by hundreds of local applicants and allowed them to apply for roles and find out more about working with the Council and other local employers. Delegates also had access to ongoing support and advice to job seekers to help them succeed in their job search. The total number of LBTH apprentices in 2009-10 was 94 which exceeded the targets set and 61 people were taken on through the Future Jobs Funds project.
- 5.4.2 Another key aim has been to further develop the representation of diverse ages in the Council. This is reflected in the Workforce to Reflect the Community actions. As a result, the number of apprenticeship places was increased in 2009/10 to ensure opportunities are available to younger people.

The HR team for Positive Action, Progression and Programmes (PAPP) is responsible for delivering the Council's talent management programme. Two staff development programmes (The Aspiring Leaders Programme and the Step up Now Programmes) have been at the heart of the Council's strategy to increase the numbers of disabled and BME senior managers and establishing a coaching culture and career progression activities have underpinned these. Between 2008 and 2009 twenty seven members of staff moved up in their career as a result of these programmes.

- 5.4.3 We also wanted to extend the different develop opportunities to the wider staff group and to staff who joined the council following qualification from the graduate programme. In October 2009 both coaching and career develop opportunities are open to all staff. The Driving Your Career Conference offered advice on presentation and interview skills. It also offered the opportunity to experience a number of mainstream interview tests that applicants encounter at interview.

In relation to coaching feedback has been very positive. Coaching has been offered to new managers as part of their orientation. It has also helped retain staff who felt stuck by offering advice on in job progression options. The Café' coaching facility at the conference was also very popular and might be repeated for individual Directorates.

5.5 DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL

5.5.1 The range of services within Development and Renewal expanded during 2009-10 to include Homelessness and Lettings (Housing Options) and the building Schools for the Future Team. Membership of the Directorate's Equalities Focus Group has been strengthened to include representation from these additional services. Our Directorate priorities include

- Strengthening neighbourhoods and increasing the overall supply of housing for local people, including the range of affordable and family housing;
- reducing unemployment and fostering enterprise;
- creating opportunities for residents to get into training access to lifelong learning opportunities and acquiring the skills for employment to exploit job opportunities.

5.5.2 Achievements in 2009-10 included:

- 3074 people in 2009/10 of which 77% were from BME communities and 24% were female, were engaged by Skillsmatch.
- 75 young people have been able to benefit from Future Job Fund placements in the local authority;
- Our Disabled Grant Scheme achieved recognition nationally and ensured that 158 Disabled Facilities Grants were approved facilitating adaptations to allow disabled occupants to remain living independently in their own homes

5.5.3 The Directorate supported the council's ambitions to be assessed as delivering "Excellent" services. Our case study, submitted for the accompanying evidence for the Equalities Framework for Local Government assessment, has been included in the case studies published by the IDeA and Planning Advisory Service on Equalities and Diversity: Improving Planning Outcomes for the community.

5.5.4 During the period leading up to the assessment D & R also held a series of lunchtime seminars for staff, on 2012 delivery and Equalities by the Service Head for the 2012 Unit and the Olympic Delivery Authority's Head of Equality and Inclusion, and on Muslim women and worklessness by the Young Foundation. Both seminars were very well received by staff and the Directorate's Information and Equalities Team is currently developing a programme for 2010-11.

5.5.5 Tower Hamlets was one of 5 London authorities to take part in the Government Office for London funded project, London Excels. This project has sought to develop a narrative about equalities, human rights and cohesion – an Equalities Story of Place. The case studies will be launched later in 2010.

5.5.6. Priorities for Development and Renewal in 2010-11 will include the following:

1. The council's first Local Economic Assessment will be completed during 2010-11. As well as providing a comprehensive picture about the borough's economy, the LEA will also include a "Worklessness Assessment" and the accompanying EqIA will help to shape our priorities in the emerging Employment and Enterprise Strategies.

2. Work in partnership with Tower Hamlets Homes to achieve a two-star service by late 2010 as well as supporting their aspiration to be assessed as “an achieving” organisation in 2010.
3. Continue to integrate equalities outcomes into the Directorate’s business planning processes.

6. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGE EQUALITY SCHEME

6.1 The Council’s first Age Equality Scheme was agreed in April 2009. Its main focus has been on young and older people who are more likely to experience significant discrimination due to their age. Attitudes and beliefs about young and older people can lead to them being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. We believe that young and older people have the right to equality and opportunity and make a significant and valuable contribution to the community at large.

6.2 Some of the key achievements thus far are as follows:

- Enhancing the involvement of young people in the Partnership decision making structures, preliminary voting is underway in the Young Mayor elections. So far 4,800 young people have voted. Schools will vote on 20 January 2010 and the count will be on the following day.
- Improve the extent to which older people can remain in their own home throughout their lifetime, seen as a central part of the personalization service; the hospital discharge service has started at the Royal London Hospital. An initial evaluation of the service has also been completed and the in-take service is due to start April 2010.
- Enhancing older people’s feelings of safety in open spaces by identification of crime reduction and security priorities: the Parks and Play Service in the Communities, Localities and Culture Directorate are monitoring this closely.

7. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

7.1 There was considerable **progress in producing the updated Disability Equality Scheme**. This has been fundamental in us fulfilling our commitment to changing the culture and attitude towards disability to improve access to and delivery of goods, works and services to disabled residents and disabled staff.

7.2 A vital part of the development of the refreshed DES which will take us forward in the next three years is what we have learned from the first Scheme. We made really good progress in implementing the action plan, and have achieved 82% of our original actions. Although not all have been completed, the majority have been met within the timescale set. These outstanding actions and others that are ongoing have been incorporated into the revised DES. Whilst the overarching objectives of the revised Scheme remain largely unchanged from the first scheme, we are in a very different place in regard to disability and how we continue to improve how we deliver on our disability duty.

7.3 Throughout this year a process of internal and external consultation was

undertaken to develop the **Tower Hamlets Pan-Disability Panel**. It has been designed to improve engagement with our disabled population by increasing the actual numbers we talk to and the methods by which we do it. At the same time the Panel will offer us an opportunity to build better working relationships between Third Sector disability organisations, service providers and the Council.

- 7.4 An information and enrolment day took place at the Brady Arts Centre on 12th November and approximately 100 people attended (70 community members and 30 support staff). There was general agreement that it was a good event and participants particularly enjoyed the Chinwag Theatre role play scenarios, delivered against four pre-briefed scenarios.
- 7.5 The Accessible Consultative Transport Forum has moved into the PDP structure and is known as the Transport sub-group. The first meeting to discuss terms of reference, election processes and a workplan has now taken place; two meetings have taken place since then. We will use this as a 'pilot' and take any lessons learnt forward for developing the other sub-groups. The next sub-group to form will be A Great Place To Live.
- 7.6 Tower Hamlets Council has recently established the **Disability Employment Initiative**, in partnership with the Tower Project, local disability advocacy organisation. This Initiative enables disabled people, to undertake unpaid three month works placements, in order to give them the experience and training needed to increase the number of disabled people working for the Council.

8. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

- 8.1 Positive movement has been made in regards to the revision of the Gender Equality Scheme. The GES monitoring group was fully established and has now fulfilled its function to assist in the development of the GES outlining six key areas for scoping and inclusion within the revised GES. These include: Community safety; Economic inactivity and employment; Strengthening third sector services for women; Health inequality; Boys educational attainment and positive activities for girls; and Transgender equality.
- 8.2 During 2009-10 we collated information on these priority areas and worked with members of the GES Monitoring Group to assess our current responses to these issues and identify areas for improvement. The outcome of this process, along with consultation with internal and external partners will inform the development of the new GES in 2010-11. The new Scheme will aim to build on existing work as well as introduce new areas that have not previously been covered according to the gaps and issues that have come out of consultation with internal and external partners and feedback on the last GES. It will tie in more strongly and coherently with the Council's Community Plan and overall organisational objectives, ensuring that gender equality is a core part of what we do. The strong relationship with the third sector that has been built up during the life of the last GES has ensured strong input from them during the revision for the new GES and will continue to ensure impact on the ground. Actions and objectives have been revised to ensure clarity and practical meaning, in order to work towards achievable outcomes and tangible progress at the conclusion of the Scheme.

9. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

- 9.1 The overarching objectives of the revised Race Equality Scheme, 2009-12, remain largely unchanged from the first two Schemes. What has changed is the profile of our communities and some of the ways and areas in which inequality is manifested. Taking into account these changes, underpinning the Scheme is a challenge to adopt a sharper approach to understanding the diverse needs of communities in Tower Hamlets and responding to race equality priorities. In response during 2009-10 we focused on reviewing our work with smaller minority communities focussing on new migrants and the Somali community.
- 9.2 The work of the ***New Migrants and Refugees Forum*** continues with a series of seminars that seek to influence services and decision makers. A number of activities have emerged and are being addressed in relation to health, education and housing. The Migrant Impact Project is in place working with a targeted population of younger and older women and these two programmes based at the Arbour Youth Centre and Toynbee Hall have helped and supported over 265 women.
- 9.3 A series of meetings were held with members of the Somali community, officers from the Council, Police and NHS Tower Hamlets in response to on-going concerns within the Somali community about access to services, public engagement and workforce representation. As a result of this the Tower Hamlets Partnership commissioned a short piece of qualitative research to analyse and understand the complex needs of this community by looking at three areas of service delivery and how well these address the needs of Somali users. The areas that were looked at were the Somali communities' engagement with police, health and children services. The recommendations of this report will be taken forward in 2010-11.

10. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELIGION/BELIEF EQUALITY SCHEME

- 10.1 Much of our community work is focussed on the Interfaith Forum which remains active. The Forum has been involved in a number of projects which have included:
- Production of the 2010 Interfaith Calendar;
 - Supporting the production of the 'No Place for Hate' film;
 - Working with the Tower Hamlets Street Pastors. The Street Pastors are volunteers from the Christian Community who actively reach out to vulnerable young people and support and engage them in a variety of locations, including streets, in the pubs and clubs.
 - Taking part in an interfaith visit to Bosnia. Members of the Forum, the Council and local organisations took part in a seven day trip to Bosnia with the focus on learning about the faith tensions in the country and sharing that with the communities of Tower Hamlets experiences of interacting with faith communities. A short film was produced, 'Fragile Peace' which explores the visit to Bosnia. The visit and film was funded by the Council's Preventing Violent Extremism fund.

During 2009-10 the Forum has developed its links with local faith groups and projects through the establishment of four local Interfaith Networks, each representing two Local Area Partnership areas in the borough. Alternate meetings of the Forum have been hosted by these Networks, who have used the opportunity

to showcase examples of work undertaken by faith communities in the local area. At these meetings members of the Forum have heard about the great variety of work undertaken by faith communities at a local or neighbourhood level.

- 10.2 Although some of the work on this Scheme has been delayed due to staff sickness, it remains largely on track. Improvements have been made as an organisation, with the recent implementation of a dress code policy to ensure that decisions about dress do not lead to direct or indirect discrimination of individuals based on religion or belief, and we are looking at the development of an interfaith forum for staff to be involved in interfaith issues and events.
- 10.3 The Community Safety Team also been doing work around improving the security of places of worship through the 'Designing Out Crime' funding, doing particular work with churches which have been subject to vandalism and graffiti. Four churches have received specialist advice and financial support to make improvements to the security of their churchyards. There have been delays in the construction of railings on one site due to delays with the planning consent process and poor performance by contract partners.
- 10.4 The issues around Muslim women and worklessness was also picked up as part of an Overview and Scrutiny session with councilors on worklessness in the borough earlier in this financial year and a number of recommendations have come out of this. Positive progress should continue further now that internal staffing issues have been resolved.

11. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEXUAL ORIENTATION EQUALITY SCHEME

- 11.1 Inherent in the production of this inaugural Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme (SOES) was an acknowledgement that we need to understand more about the lives, experiences and needs of our diverse LGB communities. The research and consultation undertaken to inform the Scheme represented a significant foundation for future work with our partners. We know, however, that the Scheme and its actions represent some of the key headlines about issues for LGB communities, rather than the full story. Our aim in implementing the Scheme is that it provides a basis for deepening our engagement with these communities so that they can continually shape the priorities for our work on sexual orientation equality.
- 11.2 In February 2010 the LGBT Forum contributed positively to the delivery of a programme of events to mark LGBT History Month. The mailing list and involvement in the forum continued to grow and the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme actions have formed the basis of the meetings with the forum checking on and influencing the delivery of the Scheme action plan.
- 11.2 The Forum has formed a number of significant partnerships with strategic partners such as the Police and the Hate Crime Unit who attend meetings and regularly provide data and reports on community safety issues. A further development in 2009/10 has been the agreement to create a Virtual Forum to make use of the internet, face book etc as a means of engaging with a wider cross section of LGBT agencies and individuals. Some key actions in the SOES was in relation to education issues and the Forum has influenced the way homophobic bullying is addressed in schools by supporting the changes being implemented in schools and within the Children, Schools and Families services. The Forum has endorsed the

new publicity and has supported the raising of awareness and the focus in schools.

- 11.3 It is this overarching priority to involve LGB communities and partners in our work on sexual orientation that has driven some of the key actions taken over the past six months including development of the Rainbow Hamlets Forum which is the renamed LGBT Community Forum.

12. PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE)

- 12.1 One year on since 28 local community projects were commissioned using the Preventing Violent Extremism funding we held a conference to assess progress. Challenges remain in determining what success looks like for this work but there is a clear desire to explore this complex area in a productive way and within the context of defining One Tower Hamlets.
- 12.2 The controversial nature of the Government's Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) agenda and a small number of adverse media reports has created challenges for the delivery of our local PVE Programme. However, supported by strong partnership work with the central and regional government colleagues and the Prevent police team, strong political leadership and long-standing community cohesion work together with positive relationship with the community, specifically the faith communities, we were able to successfully overcome these. Now, almost all PVE funded organisations are more confident in talking about PVE issues publicly and are actively engaged in the delivery of the agenda in their local areas. This community confidence has been highlighted in increased publicity and coverage of organisations activities in East End Life, the Prevent Newsletter and other publications.
- 12.3 The Muslim Women's Collective and Bold Creative, two of our funded organisations, won the prestigious and high-profile 2010 London Prevent Awards for their innovative work.
- 12.4 Our Prevent Action Plan was reviewed by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism and we received positive feedback, highlighting example of good practice in all areas. The successful delivery of our annual Prevent conference has been a milestone in our engagement with the funded organisations which also further strengthened our partnership arrangements and reassured the funded groups about the Prevent work and its relevance in the current climate.

13. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (DEAP) MONITORING

- 13.1 The monitoring of the DEAP is undertaken by the Directorate Equality Liaison Officers (DELOs) and reported to the Corporate Equalities Steering Group. The DEAP is agreed by Cabinet annually and monitored by Overview and Scrutiny six-monthly. The Diversity and Equality Action Plan covers the period from April 2009 to March 2010 and is reviewed every six months. Progress is measured for each key activity and milestone; a full progress report of the Action Plan is attached at Appendix One.

13.2 Performance for each of key activity milestones is measured using the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) traffic light system. Each milestone is allocated one of three performance levels:

- RED Progress milestone not achieved, and not likely to be achieved within three months of the deadline
- GREEN Progress milestone achieved or on target to be achieved within the deadline

13.3 Overall Progress for all milestones

Table 1: Progress milestones 2009/10 by status

Progress Status (RAG)	Number	Percentage
RED	7	12%
GREEN	50	88%
TOTAL	57	100%

At six months, 81% per cent of all milestones within the Plan had been met or were on target to be met within target timescales.

13.4 Progress by Directorate

Table 2: Progress milestones broken down by Directorate

Directorate	RED	%	GREEN	%	Total Milestones
Chief Executive's	5	30	12	70	17
Resources	1	4	22	96	23
Development & Renewal	1	4	13	96	14
Children's Services	4	30	9	70	13
Adults Health and Wellbeing	0	0	1	100	1
Communities, Localities and Culture	0	0	5	100	5
TOTAL	10		62		60

Please note some of the directorates share milestones within an action

Overall 2 out of the 93 milestones have exceeded target timescales and have been assessed as 'red'. These six actions sit within the Chief Executive's Directorate. This was due to staff constraints and service changes. However, the actions will be delivered by September 2010. The two 'red' actions are as follows:

- 1 Establish an interfaith staff forum to act as a reference group for consultation on prayer/reflection space and interfaith events; and

- 2 Reasonable Adjustments on the grounds of religion/belief guidance produced.

An officer, with the lead on gender and faith equality is now in place to undertake these actions and ensure they are delivered.

13.5 Milestone status by equality strand

	Status of milestone for each equality strand (% of all actions within each equality strand)					
	Race	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Religion/ belief	Age
Red	10%	N/A	0%	20%	70%	0%
Green	90%	N/A	100%	80%	30%	100%
Total	100%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%

13.6 Reasons for red milestones

Table 3: Reasons for red milestones

Reason	Number of all red
Action has been superseded by new guidance or requirements from other organisations	1
Staffing constraints / restructure has limited capacity to deliver on time	6
Action still being progressed but timescale slipped	3

It is important that the reasons for red milestones are fully understood so that barriers to performance can be addressed. Table 3 summarises the reasons for failing to achieve the milestones by the due date.

Analysis of progress shows consistency of implementation across all Directorates and, at the end of the year, 81% per cent of all milestones within the Plan had been met or were on target to be met within target timescales.

14 NEXT STEPS

14.1 Assessment of our progress in 2009/10 thus far highlights significant progress but our current work sits within a much wider context and therefore will always throw up challenges. The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) assessment has helped us shape our further thinking and so listed below are just some of the issues which will need to be considered further:

- 1 Following the passing of the **new Equality Act** earlier this year, we now have to consider how it will affect our work. The Act will require us to do things we already do, such as the Single Equality Duty where all equality strands need to be considered in everything we do. However the act will also require us to do things we have not done before, such as considering social economic status as an equality strand.
- 2 We are committed to delivering the improvements in the priority areas identified in the Equality Schemes. We also needed to use these schemes

to develop a **Single Equality Framework**, which will help us to respond to the Equality Act and help us to understand the multiple and complex causes of inequality in the borough. Although anti-poverty does sit at the heart of our work we need to refine our thinking and practice about how the socio-economic duty sits with our other equality duties.

- 3 To strengthen and build on our Partnership work, we need to develop the local **Diversity and Equality Network (DEN)**. We have started this process by engaging with members of the DEN to identify the common aims making the DEN more useful and powerful in such work.
- 4 The EFLG assessment showed us that we still have work to do in understanding the equality issues of all our different communities in our highly diverse borough. This essentially means we need to consider the smaller or less obvious communities in the borough, not just the big communities.
- 5 The EFLG assessment found that our **data collection**, concerning equality issues, was good but we needed to have clearer systems for sharing this data. By having a system where equality data can be shared across the organisation and its partners in an easy fashion, we will be more sophisticated in our analysis of data, be able to create more focused actions, stop any duplication of data gathering and have a true picture of where the gaps in our data exist.
- 6 Finally, in a changing financial environment for local government, we need to ensure equalities are considered in everything. A truly efficient organisation is one that not only offers value for money but does this by not being discriminatory to any particular group. In a time of less resources, it is often the most disadvantaged that are effected in the most adverse way. We need to ensure this does not happen in this era of public sector cuts.

15 CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

- 15.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider progress made by the Council in implementing its Diversity and Action Plan 2009/2010 and its six equality schemes.
- 15.2.1 The Council operates executive arrangements under the Local Government Act 2000. Pursuant to those arrangements the Council is required to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee with functions that include: (a) scrutinising and reviewing the Council's exercise of its executive and non-executive functions; and (b) making reports and recommendations in relation to the same. The Council's Constitution makes provision consistent with the statutory requirements. The consideration of this progress report may be considered as falling within the committee's review function.
- 15.2.2 The Council is subject to general equality duties in relation to race, gender and disability, details of which are as follows. The Council is required in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of gender, race and disability. The Council must also have regard to the need to eliminate harassment on grounds of gender and disability. The Council

must in addition have regard to the need to: promote equality of opportunity in these areas, promote good relations between persons of different racial groups; take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons; promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

15.2.3 The Council is not presently subject to general equality duties in respect of age, sexuality and religion or belief. In the absence of general equality duties, the Council is still subject to obligations not to discriminate on grounds of age, sexuality and religion or belief. To the extent that progress is reported on broader goals of promoting diversity and equality, then it may be viewed as a matter of good administration, consistent with the Equality Framework for Local Government, and in pursuance of the Council's goal of One Tower Hamlets set out in the Community Plan. The Council is empowered under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything which it considers likely to promote the social, economic or environmental well being of Tower Hamlets, provided the action is not otherwise prohibited by statute. The power may be exercised in relation to, or for the benefit of: (a) the whole or any part of Tower Hamlets; or (b) all or any persons resident in Tower Hamlets. In exercising the power, regard must be had to the Community Plan to which the report draws some links.

15.2.4 The Equality Act 2010 has been passed, but not yet commenced. The Act seeks to harmonise the law on equality. It proposes to introduce a public sector equality duty that will require the Council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who have relevant protected characteristics and those who do not; and (c) foster good relations between those who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. The Act also proposes to introduce a duty on the Council to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the desirability of exercising the functions in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantages.

16. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

16.1 This report provides the annual monitoring report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's progress in implementing its Diversity and Equality Action Plan (DEAP) for 2009/10.

16.2 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report, and any additional costs that arise from implementing the Plan, must be contained within directorate revenue budgets. Also, if the Council agrees further action in response to this report's recommendations then officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

17. ONE TOWER HAMLETS

17.1 The Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2009-10 represents an important step in progressing the Council's commitment to building One Tower Hamlets as a place in which people live together and where they are treated with respect and fairness

regardless of their differences. The Plan demonstrates that a commitment to tackling inequality and promoting cohesion is at the heart of the Council's agenda and sets out the work due to take place to integrate diversity and equality fully into all aspects of service delivery and employment practice. The 2009-10 Plan also explores the inter relationship between work on equalities and community cohesion. The aim of the Action Plan is to create an environment in which everyone who lives and works in our borough is treated with dignity and respect and where everyone can improve their life chances and access the increasing opportunities on offer.

- 17.2 The Diversity and Equality Action Plan aims to tackle the barriers currently preventing some of the most disadvantaged people in our community from accessing the life opportunities on offer and aims to enable them to actively participate in creating and sharing prosperity in the borough. It also sets out the role of elected members and other community leaders in bringing about the change required to drive forward real improvement in relation to equality and cohesion.

18. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 18.1 Efforts will be made to ensure that in delivering the commitments of the Diversity and Equality Action Plan the impact on the environment is kept to an absolute minimum. This includes the use of recycled paper in any documentation, and careful consideration of the methods used to engage with local communities, partners and staff.

19. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 19.1 The Council is seeking to implement an ambitious diversity and equality agenda in the context of changes in national legislation and standards. Progress to date has been very positive, but there is still much to be done if all the Council's targets are to be achieved and all the new legislative requirements are fully complied with. Any slippage could potentially undermine this.

- 19.2 The Diversity and Equality Action Plan provides a focus for all the Council's equalities work, and a means by which Members can ensure that each of the progress milestones are achieved. The arrangements in place to review progress during the year through the Corporate Equalities Steering Group, Corporate Management Team and finally by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are considered to be effective ways of keeping this work on track.

- 19.3 Diversity and equality performance indicators will help keep the focus firmly on delivery and outcomes. The emphasis on consultation will mean that the Council's performance in this area will be judged by the experiences of service users on the ground.

- 19.4 The Council will continue to work closely with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to ensure that local practice in implementing the Equality Standard and all equalities issues is informed by best practice taking place in other parts of the country.

20. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2009/10

Appendix 2 – Age Equality Scheme Action Plan 2010/13

Appendix 3 – Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007/10

Appendix 4 – Race Equality Scheme Action Plan 2010/13
Appendix 5 – Religion/Belief Scheme Action Plan 2010/13
Appendix 6 – Sexual Orientation Scheme Action Plan 2010/13

All background papers attached to report

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