


Cabinet 8 April 2015	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Louise Russell, Service Head – Corporate Strategy and Equality	Classification: Unrestricted
Strategic Plan and Single Equality Framework 2015/16	

Lead Member	Cllr Aminur Khan (Cabinet Member for Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Wards affected	All Wards
Community Plan Theme	All
Key Decision?	Yes

1 SUMMARY

This report presents the draft Strategic Plan 2015/16 and Single Equality Framework 2015/16.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Strategic Plan (appendices 1 and 2)
2. Approve the draft Single Equality Framework (appendix 3)

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 The Strategic Plan outlines the council's key priorities for the year alongside the more detailed actions that will support their delivery. The plan also sets out the strategic performance measures with which we track our progress.
- 3.2 The Single Equality Framework (SEF) sets out the Council's framework for tackling inequality and promoting cohesion. We have integrated the equality objectives of the SEF into the Strategic Plan, ensuring that a focus on tackling inequality informs the strategic direction of the council. It also enables us to demonstrate that we are meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to

prepare and publish objectives which demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Duty.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Mayor in Cabinet may choose not to agree a Strategic Plan or Single Equality Framework. This course of action is not recommended as there would be a significant planning gap: the Strategic Plan and SEF are key elements of the council's business planning arrangements. In addition, the council's priorities for the year would not be articulated and the key supporting activities and performance measures would not be agreed for monitoring.
- 4.2 The Mayor in Cabinet may choose to amend the Strategic Plan or Single Equality Framework prior to approval. If he wishes to amend the Plan or SEF, regard would need to be given to the Council's medium term financial plan, with which they are aligned, as well as any impact arising from the changes.

5 BACKGROUND

Strategic Plan

- 5.1 The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's priorities and key activities for 2015/16 alongside the strategic measures with which we will track our progress. At January Cabinet, Members agreed the Outline Strategic Plan 2015/16 (appendix 1) which included the narrative, strategic priorities and high-level activities as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan Report. Since then, Directorates have reviewed and updated their activities, developed the accompanying milestones and confirmed their strategic performance measures (appendix 2).
- 5.2 Whilst the Council's priorities and strategic performance measures remain largely the same as in 2014/15, there are a significant number of changes to the key activities. This includes a number of new initiatives to reflect key priority areas such as:
- Delivering a programme of new-build Council housing
 - Delivering the Whitechapel Vision and increasing the pace of regeneration in Poplar
 - Refreshing the borough's Local Plan
 - Commencing the Isle of Dogs Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF)
 - Ensuring integrated local support for the roll out of Universal Credit

- Implementing the Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Developing opportunities for growth and sustainability in local commercial districts
- Embedding the provisions of the Children and Families Act to support children with special educational needs
- Improving identification of, and response to, victims of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Single Equality Framework (SEF)

- 5.3 The SEF is the Council's corporate strategy for understanding diversity, tackling inequality and promoting cohesion. It provides the strategic direction for the Council's work on equality. It embraces the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and sets out the organisation's strategic equality priorities. The Strategic Plan and SEF were informed by the Borough Equality Assessment (BEA), which summarises what is known about age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation inequality in the borough.
- 5.4 The Council has developed a set of equality performance measures to help monitor progress against our equality priorities; these are incorporated in to the Strategic Plan and SEF 2015/16. These include existing performance measures that relate to equality and indicators which will be disaggregated by specific equality strands where there is a need to narrow the gap in terms of outcomes for specific groups.
- 5.5 Following approval of the 2015/16 Strategic Plan and SEF, targets for performance measures will be developed, informed by year-end outturns.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan and Single Equality Framework are core planning documents; this report sets out the actions planned for the period 2015/16. The documents provide a framework for allocating and directing financial resources to priorities for 2015/16.
- 6.2 In the event that during the implementation of individual projects and schemes throughout the year financial implications arise outside the current budget provision, officers are obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made. This report has no other financial implications.

7. **LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan and Single Equality Framework are closely aligned with the Community Plan, which sets out the council's sustainable community strategy within the meaning of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Strategic Plan specifies how the Council will prioritise delivery of its functions and thus ranges across the Council's statutory powers and duties. The proposed actions are capable of being carried out lawfully and it will be for officers to ensure that this is the case.
- 7.2 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires best value authorities, including the Council, to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. The development of the actions in the Strategic Plan, together with their delivery and subsequent monitoring will contribute to the way in which the best value duty can be fulfilled. Monitoring reports to members and actions arising from those reports will help to demonstrate that the Council has undertaken activity to satisfy the statutory duty.
- 7.3 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).
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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.

7.6 The objectives proposed in the Single Equality Framework appear to have been prepared in accordance with the EHRC guidance.

8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The Strategic Plan 2015/16 incorporates the council's Single Equality Framework equality objectives, ensuring that a focus on tackling inequality informs the strategic direction of the council. This approach enables us to demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to prepare and publish objectives which demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Duty: to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people.

9. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

9.1 The Strategic Plan includes a focus on action for a greener environment. This includes specific actions to protect our environment, improve parks and open spaces and support local sustainable transport.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Strategic Plan provides a strategic framework for other strategies and plans. Risks relating to the achievement of its objectives are therefore monitored through the council's corporate risk register and directorate risk registers. Risks are assessed for likelihood and impact, and have responsible owners and programmes of mitigating actions.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Strategic Plan and SEF have a strong focus on community safety. The key priorities, activities, milestones and measures are set out within the Safe and Cohesive theme.

12. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

12.1 The Strategic Plan highlights the current financial context which includes significantly reduced funding for the council. The plan sets out a range of activities to support efficiency and value for money. Progress against the performance measures in the Strategic Plan is reported to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet, alongside the Council's budget monitoring, on a quarterly basis.

Appendices:

- Strategic Plan (appendices 1 and 2)
- Single Equality Framework (appendix 3)

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

- None