

<b>COMMITTEE</b> Overview and Scrutiny	<b>DATE</b> 10 June 2008	<b>CLASSIFICATION</b> Unrestricted	<b>REPORT NO.</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b> 11.1
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Acting Assistant Chief Executive		<b>TITLE:</b> Diversity & Equality Action Plan 2007/08: End of Year Monitoring Report		
<b>ORIGINATING OFFICER(S):</b> Frances Jones Diversity and Equality Coordinator, Scrutiny and Equalities		<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> All		

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This end of year monitoring report informs Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's progress in implementing its Diversity and Equality Action Plan for 2007/8. A full progress report is attached at Appendix One and the Corporate Priorities Action Plan is attached at Appendix Two.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and comment on the progress in implementing the Council's Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2007/08.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

#### LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE DRAFTING OF THIS REPORT

**Brief description of background papers:**      **Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection**

Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2007/08

Michael Keating  
Acting Assistant Chief Executive  
020 7364 3183

### **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 2006 the Council was externally validated as being at the highest level of the Equality Standard for Local Government (Level 5) and the corporate 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 the Equality Standard for Local Government, for the implementation of the Council's Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes, and actions to ensure that the Council's commitment to community cohesion is mainstreamed within all services.
- 3.3 The DEAP 2007/08 incorporates key strategic activities which aim to:
- Maintain Level 5 of the Equalities Standard and ensure that the Council is able to meet the requirements of the revised Standard by 2009. The revised Standard requires the Council to maintain a high standard of practice in relation to race, gender and disability equality and mainstream arrangements for extending this good practice to three further equalities strands: age, religion/belief and sexual orientation. The Council must also ensure that relevant human rights implications are considered within policy and practice.
  - Strengthen and further progress the Council's internal equalities structures and processes.
  - Work with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector to move towards a Level 5 standard of equalities practice across the borough.
  - Respond to emerging priorities relating to community cohesion and the needs of new migrant communities.

### **4 EMBEDDING EQUALITIES ACROSS THE COUNCIL**

- 4.1 Both the Equality Standard and Diversity and Equality Action Plan represents a tool that can bring about change, but this can only be achieved through an active engagement in the processes it sets out. To achieve this the Council has embedded equality priorities across directorates through the Council's performance management framework.
- 4.2 Leadership has been key to the delivery of this agenda and this has been rooted in the monthly Corporate Equalities Steering Group (CESG) meetings which have taken place throughout the year chaired by the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive. Each Directorate has been represented by the Directorate Equalities Liaison Officer (DELO) who have convened monthly directorate-based focus groups.
- 4.3 Through our external and internal equality forums we have continued to consult both staff and service users to test the effectiveness of service initiatives. To strengthen consultation and involvement arrangements a review of the internal and external equality forums took place last year, the results of which have informed the development of Forums and their work programmes for 08/09. Some examples of recent work are listed below.

- Following feedback from the Disabled Staff Forum, further consultation took place around welfare policies including the Carer's Policy, Rehabilitation Leave and Flexible Working Hours.
- The Council's Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Forum has reviewed the Council's Workforce to Reflect the Community Action Plan and will be scrutinising its delivery in the year ahead.
- Tower Hamlets LGBT Forum coordinated and delivered a successful programme of events for LGBT History Month 2008.

- 4.4 Underpinning the implementation of our work is a major programme of Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs) covering gender, race, faith, disability, sexuality and age. A total of 39 EqIAs were completed in 07/08, which included assessments of significant functions such as the revised Community Plan 2020, school admissions and youth participation. The outcomes of the EqIA action plans have been built into team level action plans and where appropriate picked up at a directorate or corporate level.
- 4.5 Over the past six months the Council has also undertaken a detailed statutory three year review of the Council's functions, policies and proposed policies for the their relevance to the promotion of diversity and equality. From this review a new three year programme of EqIAs has been established for 2008-11.

## **5 MONITORING**

- 5.1 The Diversity and Equality Action Plan covers the period from April 2007 to March 2008 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.
- 5.2 End of year performance for each of key activity milestones is measured using the Red and Green (RG) traffic light system. Each milestone is allocated one of two performance levels:
- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| RED   | Progress milestone not achieved, and not likely to be achieved within three months of the deadline |
| GREEN | Progress milestone achieved  |
- 5.3 Appendix Two details progress made on implementing the Diversity and Equality Corporate Priorities Action Plan. This Plan sets out actions lead by the Diversity and Equality Team based in Scrutiny & Equalities and in partnership with all service Directorates, to maintain Level 5 of the Revised Equality Standard and strengthen and further progress the Council's internal equalities structures and processes.
- 5.4 Key achievements on corporate actions include:
- Establishment of new Diversity and Equality Partnership Group bringing together equalities officers from key statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations to strengthen equalities practice and work towards a Level 5 borough.
  - Council wide Diversity and Equality Conference which brought together Council staff and representatives from some of our major contractors to look at how we continue to drive forward the diversity and equality agenda in 2008/09

- All Council policies and functions assessed for relevance across six equality strands and a new test of relevance and three year EQIA work programme agreed by DMTs and CESG.
- The contribution of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to the Peer Support Initiative and national best practice guidance.
- Review of diversity and equality monitoring across the six equality strands and publication of revised guidance to strengthen the Council's diversity and equality practice.

## 5.5 Overall Progress for all milestones

Table 1: All progress milestones 2007/08 by status

<b>Progress Status (RG)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
RED	14	10
GREEN	125	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	139	100

5.5.1 At the end of the year 90 percent of activities within the Plan had been completed. This represents significant achievements in a number of areas, including:

- The Council's first **Gender Equality Scheme** was launched in November 2007 and has driven forward work on addressing inequality between men, women and transgender people (see para 6.2.1 below).
- In January 2008, the Council was placed 17<sup>th</sup> in the **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index** of gay-friendly organisations, and ranked top local authority in London. This represents a significant improvement on our performance in 2006/07 when we were ranked 28<sup>th</sup>.
- In September the Council was ranked joint fifth out of 116 public and private sector organisations by the **Employers Forum on Disability**. The Council scored an average of 85% on the three target areas (motivate, act and impact) this puts us in the gold award band.
- The **Diversity and Equality Network** was established in January as the vehicle for delivering on our commitment to become a 'Level 5 borough'. The Network has met quarterly throughout the year and members have produced a common diversity and equality statement which supports the principles of the One Tower Hamlets Community Plan theme.
- In March a programme of events were funded by the Council to mark **International Women's Week**. The theme for this year's events was 'Women and Work'. Thirty three local community organizations received grants to run events which celebrated the achievements of women in the workforce as well as exploring barriers to employment. As part of the week's events, thirty five year nine pupils from Central Foundation School spent a day in the Council and the PCT shadowing staff as well as meeting senior officers and Councillors.
- In May the Council held its first **Diversity and Equality conference** for staff. The conference provided an opportunity for over eighty staff from across the organisation to consider how we can work together to deliver on the core

elements of the Council's One Tower Hamlets Community Plan theme, of reducing inequalities and strengthening community cohesion.

- In February 2008 Children's Services supported the launch of 'Rainbow Parents' a support group for LGBT partners in the borough. Over one hundred people attended the event and a programme of activities and events are scheduled to take place during 2008/09.
- In May we launched the **One Tower Hamlets Community Cohesion Innovation Fund for Schools**. The pilot scheme is open to all primary and secondary schools in the borough who are required through the terms of the funding to work jointly with voluntary or private sector partners to promote community cohesion within their local communities. We are the first local authority in the country to launch such a scheme.
- The **Arts and Events** Team have organised 83 community festivals and events, against a target of 70 for 07/08.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> May the Council marked **International Day Against Homophobia** by holding a lunchtime seminar for staff on the topic, "Faith and Sexuality: A Question of Tolerance?". The talk was extremely popular with over 100 members of staff attending to hear from and take part in a discussion with a panel of faith leaders and experts.
- The Council has continued to support the development of the Interfaith Forum. In March the first **local interfaith network** was established. This group, which is based in LAPs 5 and 6, aims to bring together members of the Interfaith Forum at a local level to undertake joint activities and strengthen the links between local decision making and participation structures and faith communities. Networks will be rolled out across the borough from September following the refresh of the Tower Hamlets Partnership governance structures.
- In March the outcome of the Peer Support National Initiative was launched. Working with Gravesham and Bristol we produced additional tools to help all authorities undertake Equality Impact Assessments which can be accessed via [www.idea.gov.uk/eqia](http://www.idea.gov.uk/eqia)
- We were part of the Steering Group of Capital Ambition's Equality Standard for London Local Government. In April the project was on track to ensure 90% of London authorities reach Level 4 by April 2009.

## 5.6 Progress by Directorate

Table 2: Progress milestones broken down by Directorate

Directorate	RED	%	GREEN	%	Total Milestones
Chief Executive's	7	12%	50	88%	57
Development & Renewal	1	5%	19	95%	20
Housing	2	33%	1	67%	3
Children's Services	2	8%	23	92%	25
Adults Health & Wellbeing	0	0%	3	100%	3
Communities, Localities and Culture	2	6%	29	94%	31

TOTAL	14	11	125	89	139
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- 5.6.1 Overall 14 of the 139 progress milestones were not complete by the end of year and were assessed as 'red'.
- 5.6.2 Just over half (seven out of thirteen) of these were the responsibility of services within the Chief Executive's Directorate. 57 of the 141 milestones in the Plan are the responsibility of the Chief Executive's Directorate; the seven red actions described above therefore represent a small proportion of activity taking place in the Directorate.
- 5.6.3 The number of actions falling to each Directorate varies significantly. Chief Executive's Directorate has the largest number of actions (41%). Communities, Localities and Culture, Children's Services and Development and Renewal have a similar number of actions (accounting for between fourteen and twenty two percent of actions). Adults Health & Wellbeing and Housing have the lowest number of actions (each contributing two percent of the total number of actions).

## 5.7 Reasons for red milestones

Table 3: Reasons for red milestones

Reason	Number of all red
Awaiting action or guidance from other organisations	4
Action still being progressed but timescale has slipped	9
Progress made but failure to reach target	1

- 5.7.1 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 milestones by the due date.
- 5.7.2 The most common reason for exceeding milestone is that timescales slipped but work continues to be progressed. The reasons for milestones assessed as 'red' include:
- Not all schools have received RAISE online training, which would enable them to identify children at risk of under achievement at Key Stage 1 and 3. All schools have been offered the training but not all have participated.
  - There has been a delay in the introduction of the new national Electronic Common Assessment Framework (E-CAF). However, the Council has gone ahead with the roll out of its own Framework which is currently being piloted by the Behaviour Support Team.
  - The Regeneration Strategy has been superseded by the central government requirement on all local authorities produce Economic Assessments by 2009 which focus on employment. The Strategy is therefore currently being redeveloped as an Employment Strategy.
  - We failed to meet the target increase in participation of older people in Idea Store activities. However participation rates did increase for this target group, rising from 4.8% in 2006 to 6% in March 2008 and further activities are planned for 2008-09.
  - The programme of works to ensure that Council buildings comply with requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act is overdue due to a delay in the capital funding bidding process. Funding has now been secured, survey work has been completed and the tendering process for this work is underway.

- Delays with the agreement of the core strategies of the borough's Local Development Framework have delayed production of finalised Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Design. However interim guidance has been produced and makes reference to CABE Access and Design guidelines.
- Production of the Diversity Strategy for Housing has been delayed to enable a comprehensive diversity profile against the six strands to be developed. This will be completed in 2008.
- Implementation of Single Status was delayed while Trade Unions conducted a second ballot of members. Pay changes will be implemented in May 2008.
- Revised recruitment branding for Council and the PCT which is aimed at opening up traditionally male/female occupations has been embedded within the revised Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy and will be introduced from August 2008.
- There have been delays in the embedding of statistical profile of disability in THIS Borough due to a lack of data. This will be addressed in quarter one of 2008-09.
- Consultation with the LGBT community and staff forums has not provided sufficient opportunities to identify key barriers and issues for transgender people as participation by transgender people in these groups is low. A targeted piece of work has been commissioned for 2008-09 to better identify the needs of this group.
- The scope of the review of housing related floating support for disabled people has been extended significantly to allow for completing options to be assessed. A report is likely to receive final sign-off by Cabinet in May 2008.
- The restructure of the Tower Hamlets Partnership has lead to a delay in the delivery of two milestones, both of which will be completed in 2008-09:
  - Revisions to the Partnership's Consultation and Involvement Framework to bring it into line with national disability advice on consulting disabled people
  - Review of the Partnership's Boards to encourage greater participation by women

## 5.8 Progress by Equality Strand

Table 4: Progress milestones broken down by equality strand

Milestone status	Status of milestone for each equality strand (% of all actions within each equality strand)					
	Race	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Religion/ belief	Age
Red	4	8	7	5	4	5
Green	43	40	49	2	7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

- 5.8.1 The table above demonstrates the DEAP progress against each of the six equality strands. A significant proportion of all activities will impact on several equalities strands, for example a number of the workforce to reflect the community activities relate to race and disability equality. However this table shows the distribution of all milestones under each equality strand. Since April 2007 we have had a legal duty to publish Equality Schemes for race, disability and gender. The strategic level actions from these Schemes are incorporated within the Diversity and Equality Action Plan and monitored corporately. Progress updates on all three Schemes are published annually on the Council's website and summaries of progress are given below. We also have new legal obligations to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age in

relation to employment practices and have a corporate commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination on the basis of all six equality strands. As is clear from the above breakdown next year further development is needed around sexual orientation, faith/belief and age.

5.8.2 We have not analysed those actions which relate to community cohesion as activities aimed at promoting good relations between people are embedded within a significant proportion of actions. This year has seen wider debate on how to be more explicit about the promotion of cohesion both within service delivery and specific projects, in line with the development of the 'One Tower Hamlets' cross-cutting Community Plan theme. Significant pieces of work towards this include comprehensive support provided to all schools to ensure they comply with their new duty to promote community cohesion and the STEPs projects outlined above, which has been highlighted as examples of good practice by the Institute of Community Cohesion.

## **6 EQUALITY SCHEME MONITORING**

### **6.1 Summary of Progress on Race Equality Scheme**

6.1.1 The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 places a general duty on all local authorities to promote race equality and the specific duty for local authorities to produce a Race Equality Scheme once every three years which sets out how the authority will meet these duties. Each year the Council is required to monitor and review progress on the scheme both in relation to service provision and employment practice. This includes an employment duty to monitor the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion. In relation to this duty the Council has in place a Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy with targets aimed at improving the representation of BME staff across all levels of the organisation.

6.1.2 A piece of work was commissioned in October 2007 to establish the direction and associated actions for improving the proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic community staff in senior management positions in the Council and the PCT. Since this date, detailed analysis of the outcome of the work has taken place. Initial actions identified following a series of focus groups both within the Council and the PCT are as follows:

- Improvement of monitoring data
- Ensuring shared ownership of diversity targets
- Review of job descriptions and person specifications
- Establishing and developing the employer brand for both organisations
- Establishing Talent Pools of Candidates and establishing systems for Talent Pool Development
- Development of Career Pathways
- Introduction of Career Coaching
- Creating a broad menu of development options

### **6.2 Summary of Progress on Gender Equality Scheme**

6.2.1 The Council's first **Gender Equality Scheme** was launched in November 2007 and has driven forward work on addressing inequality between men, women and transgender people. Achievements include the introduction of the Single Status arrangements to ensure equal pay for men and women working for the Council, a



range of actions to tackle unemployment among women and the development of innovative programmes to support local women to participate in public life.

### 6.3 **Summary of Progress on Disability Equality Scheme**

- 6.3.1 The Council's first **Disability Equality Scheme** (DES) was published on 4 December 2006. The Scheme sets out the objectives and key actions for the Council over the next three years to meet the Disability Equality Duty and the needs of local disabled residents and disabled staff.
- 6.3.2 The Scheme's action plan contains nine objectives that are aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination for disabled people. In addition, we also have a number of other actions that are aimed at embedding the Disability Equality Duty (DED) in work with our partners and the voluntary sector, how we plan and deliver our services and support councillors in their community leadership role.
- 6.3.3 On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 we posted a copy of the Scheme's action plan with first year progress up to 30 November 2007. Of all the actions, 32 are at green, eight at amber with four at red. This shows that we are making good progress at implementing the action plan, although there are areas where we need to focus attention to deliver the action plan by December 2009.
- 6.3.4 Progress monitoring is now being undertaken quarterly and a meeting was held in February with colleagues who have a responsibility for providing services to disabled residents to discuss how written and verbal communications throughout the year are maintained before we post year two progress and to explore areas for joint working to ensure that each Directorate makes best use of resources and funding.

## 7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1 This report demonstrates that the Council is continuing to make good progress on the implementation of our diversity and equality agenda and has responded effectively to recent changes in legislation and policy. For example, during 2007-08 we published new disability and gender equality schemes, provided comprehensive support to enable schools to meet their new duty to promote community cohesion and strengthened our work on six equalities strands to meet the requirements of the revised Local Government Equalities Standard.
- 7.2 In response to comments from Members on the DEAP last year for the first time this year the plan has been linked to other key strategic and service level plans via Excelsis, the Council's performance management software. This has enabled diversity and equality work to be further strengthened and embedded in the 'golden thread' running right down from the Strategic Plan to individual work plans.
- 7.3 During the first part of this year the restructuring of Scrutiny and Equalities involved the recruitment of three new Diversity and Equality Co-ordinators. Alongside the revised Equality Standard and the new Disability and Gender duties this has given the Council the opportunity to review diversity and equality practice as was outlined in the September report to Cabinet introducing the 2007/08 DEAP. Building on work carried out during the year, the Diversity and Equality Action Plan for 2008/09 is currently being developed. This plan will focus on four 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 are:

- Tackle worklessness and economic inactivity among target groups
- Support participation and engagement of equality target groups in decision making and active citizenship activities
- Support and promote community cohesion, including: Embedding cohesion considerations into planning in key policy areas (Education, Community Safety and Housing); Support positive activities that bring people together and build bridges between communities; Support interaction between new and existing communities and; tackle all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Access to services: Address evidence of differential access to services for equality target groups to ensure that services within the Council and the wider partnership meet the needs of our communities effectively

7.4 In March 2009 we will be re-assessed against the revised Equality Standard for Local Government. The DEAP will therefore contain a comprehensive programme of actions to ensure that our equalities practice meets the requirements of the revised Standard and that we retain our Level 5 status. Key activities will include:

- A comprehensive review of all equalities training within the Council
- Embedding of revised Equalities Monitoring Guidance to ensure that all services are monitoring service users by the six equalities strands
- Development of Faith, Age and Sexual Orientation Equality Schemes

7.5 The involvement of members has been crucial to the successful implementation of the 2007/08 Plan. In February a Members' workshop was held to explore how the role of Members could be strengthened. In 2008/09 a Members' Equalities Group will be established to take forward this work.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

8.1 By incorporating national standards and legislation, such as the Race Relations Amendment Act, the integrated Diversity and Equality Action Plan represents an important step in progressing the Council's agenda. The monitoring report demonstrates the Council's good progress towards integrating equality and diversity into all aspects of service delivery and employment practice.

8.2 This report demonstrates the progress being made with creating 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.

## **9 Comments from the Chief Finance Officer**

9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Service design and provision give consideration to equalities issues and Directorate budgets reflect this. The costs of implementing the Diversity and Equality Action Plan have been met from the respective budgets.

## **10 Concurrent Report of the Chief Legal Officer**

- 10.1 The European Union Race Directive 2000/43 (published in June 2000) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin by laying down "the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin".
- 10.2 In November 2000, the European Union published the Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000/78. This Directive sets out the anti-discrimination "principle of equal treatment" in the context of sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability and age. This Directive was implemented on 2 December 2006 in relation to disability and age.
- 10.3 The Government consultation paper "Towards Equality and Diversity-Implementing the Employment Race Directive" (2001) indicated the Government's intention to implement the Directives by amendment to the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The consultation paper also referred to the Government's intention to introduce legislation to prohibit discrimination in work and training on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion and age. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 were enacted with effect from 1 and 2 December 2003 respectively and transpose the phase 1 provisions of the Directive into UK law. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 gave effect to the provisions on age discrimination with effect from 1 October 2006.
- 10.4 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 strengthens the Race Relations Act 1976 by extending protection against racial discrimination by public authorities and by placing a duty on public authorities to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote racial equality and good race relations.
- 10.5 The Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2007/08 was formulated having regard to and in compliance with legislation, and set out the Council's intentions in respect of equality. Regular monitoring and review of the plan enables the Council to maintain compliance with statutory requirements as well as measuring progress in relation to non-statutory aspects.

## **11 Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 11.1 There are no specific issues relating to the environment raised in this report.

## **12 Anti Poverty Comments**

- 12.1 The integrated Diversity and Equality Action Plan aims to tackle the barriers currently preventing some of the most disadvantaged people and marginalised communities in our borough from accessing services and take part in community life. The equalities agenda aims to enable all residents to benefit from the opportunities and improved life chances on offer and enable them to participate in creating and sharing prosperity in the borough.

## **13 Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 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 and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, are considered to be effective ways of keeping this work on track.

13.2 There have been major changes in equalities legislation over the last year and further sweeping changes are expected. The Action Plan and its monitoring ensure the Council is well placed to respond to these forthcoming measures and retain its status as a leader in diversity and equality work in local government.

Appendix One: Diversity and Equality Action Plan – End of year monitoring report 2007/08

Appendix Two: Diversity and Equality Corporate Priorities Action Plan: End of year monitoring report 2007/08