

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 20 January 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Equality Framework for Local Government Accreditation</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Chief Executive Gavin Handford, Director Policy and Partnerships</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Hamida Ali, Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon &amp; Communities</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

The Equality Framework for Local Government is a process that enabled the Council to better understand the importance of equality, and evidence that its policies, processes and leadership are developing better equality and inclusion outcomes.

The process enabled the Council to learn more about the organisation, our partners and our local communities. By drawing together equalities best practice from across the organisation and seeking and listening to our staff and partners, we will be able to learn from one another and understand how we can improve practices and relationships.

The framework also encourages a focus on local issues and prompts learning from, and the spreading of, good practice in regards to matters of equality and inclusion.

This will help the Council address a number of its Corporate Plan priorities as listed below:

- Abolish inequality in Croydon and work towards a place where all have an equal opportunity to prosper.
- Croydon becomes a more equal place
- Create a collaborative, inclusive and creative environment that allows talent to flourish, building capacity to meet our ambitions

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There are no additional costs, savings or efficiencies associated with this report.

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:** Not a key decision

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the successful outcome, following the Local Government Association Equality Framework for Local Government peer assessment, and the Council's accreditation as Achieving.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 The purpose of the report is to provide:

- information about the Council's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) Accreditation;
- update on initial feedback and conclusions received from the Peer challenge team;
- information on actions the Council will undertake to address LGA recommendations.

## **3. Background and Context**

3.1 The Council is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have set out our ambition for growth that benefits all in the borough, and improving equality of, and access to, opportunity.

3.2 The Council therefore proactively sought to undertake the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) Accreditation. The EFLG is managed and delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA).

3.3 The EFLG Accreditation is a tool that helps organisations, in discussion with local partners including local people, review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.

3.4 By using the EFLG, organisations can also be helped to deliver on the public sector equality duty (PSED).

3.5 Gaining an LGA equality accreditation will help the Council demonstrate to its service users and the wider community that equality is at the heart of everything we do, the services we deliver and quality standards are in place on matters of equality and inclusion.

3.6 The Framework covers five main performance areas, each of which is subdivided into a number of elements. The five main areas are listed below:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving Your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

## **4. The EFLG Peer Challenge**

4.1 The EFLG accreditation is undertaken through a peer challenge process, coordinated by the LGA.

4.2 The Council prepared for a peer challenge at the Achieving level of the EFLG. This level focuses on implementing systems, policies and procedures.

4.3 The Council assessed its performance against the EFLG by undertaking a self-assessment. The self-assessment template set out how the organisation is performing against each of the criteria in the framework.

4.4 In addition to the self-assessment, the following information was submitted in support of EFLG:

- a narrative report clearly setting out how the organisation has met the requirements of the EFLG at the “achieving” level under the 5 main headings of the Framework;
- 23 brief case studies demonstrating significant equality outcomes within Council services. Case studies also included work with partners and within the community;
- supporting documentary evidence.

4.5 The onsite challenge took place from 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The peer team was made up of the following individuals:

Akua Agyepong – Kent County Council  
John Cowings – Derbyshire County Council  
Gill Elliott – Local Government Association  
Sam Johnson – BCP Council  
Cllr Brigid Jones – Birmingham City Council  
Laura Wilson – Local Government Association

4.6 The peer team undertook 26 interviews, group meetings and visits with councillors (including opposition and back bench councillors), officers (senior and front line), stakeholders and partners. These sessions ensured that the peer team received feedback across all areas of the assessment, and a range of services and activities

4.7 The peer team also undertook 5 community visits. This included Community Connect Foodstop, voluntary and community groups and Thornton Heath library.

4.8 The purpose of the sessions was to test the claims made by the Council in our submission and self-assessment.

## **5. Outcome of the EFLG Accreditation**

5.1 The London Borough of Croydon has satisfied the criteria for the Achieving level of the EFLG.

5.2 The EFLG process is an improvement tool. The peer challenge team therefore identified strengths and areas for consideration against each of the EFLG criteria. These are summarised below.

## Knowing Your Communities

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for consideration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wealth of data is gathered from a wide range of sources including health and other partners</li> <li>• shift towards localities helps tailor services to communities</li> <li>• evidence based response to issues e.g. Violence Reduction Partnership; Vulnerable Adolescents Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different levels of data collection/use depending on the service</li> <li>• ensure all staff have the skills and confidence to collect protected characteristic data and understand the importance of that</li> <li>• ensure there is a good understanding of the diversity of BAME communities fully e.g. Eastern European communities</li> </ul>

## Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for consideration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong commitment to equality from political and organisational leaders</li> <li>• strong partnerships with statutory partners and the VCS</li> <li>• organisations representing voluntary sector partners feel able to influence LBC strategies and plans via the Local Strategic Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider establishing a service level steering group to ensure services have equality at the forefront of their work</li> <li>• increase opportunities for the scrutiny function to pay due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• quality use and outcomes of EAs need improving, with outcomes being implemented and monitored. Heads of service and executive directors being held accountable for the final outcome</li> </ul>

## Involving Your Communities

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for consideration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are many opportunities for young people to be involved in improving and developing Children's Services e.g. Young director Apprenticeship, Forum for SEN, Youth Offending Forum, Total Respect training, youth mayor, care leavers forum</li> <li>• the Get Involved consultation platform enables residents to influence policy making via an app, PC, tablet</li> <li>• Community Ward budgets are a useful tool for members to get involved local residents a say in how the money is spent in their areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consult with the broadest possible range of people</li> <li>• continue to develop the new approach to communications to improve access to services</li> <li>• ensure communities are informed of the outcomes of consultations</li> </ul>

## Responsive Services and Customer Care

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for consideration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Gateway approach enables a focus on holistic needs of people users and reducing the barriers between services</li> <li>the Localities approach is already working in three areas where there is the most need. Children and youth Services will be area based</li> <li>service delivery plans have to include a focus on equality and diversity and they are monitored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plans to improve service delivery in Access Croydon; these need to be implemented</li> <li>digital offer needs to be more responsive to staff and customer needs</li> <li>maximising opportunities for social value when commissioning</li> </ul>

## A skilled and Committed Workforce

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for consideration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff are proud to work for Croydon “proud to serve”</li> <li>staff networks are robust, well supported and really making a difference to equality in the organisation</li> <li>there are learning and development opportunities for staff e.g. mental health first aid, unconscious bias training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the organisation needs to improve its level of disclosure against the equality monitoring data by demonstrating it won’t disadvantage people</li> <li>BAME and disabled employees are disproportionately involved in disciplinary and grievances</li> <li>review the presentation of workforce data to easily identify needed actions</li> </ul>

5.3 The peer challenge team will provide further detail in a report. This is not available at this time but will be report to Cabinet alongside the Equalities Annual report.

## 6. Actions to address recommendations

- 6.1 The Council will be developing responses to each of the recommendations made by the EFLG peer team, omce the peer team report is received. It is proposed that this be reported to the Cabinet in March and be used to inform new equality objectives for consultation.
- 6.2 Many of the areas for consideration, identified by the peer team, were already known by the Council. In many cases work is underway / planned, and confirmation from the peer team of these areas of focus is very helpful.
- 6.3 Governance that will oversee delivery against the EFLG recommendations will include bi-monthly updates to the organisations Culture Board that will provide support for delivery, and feedback on any issues or blockages, bi-monthly updates to the Members Equality and Diversity Group, regular progress reports to the organisations Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and regular updates to

the organisations Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) focusing on the actions that are needed.

- 6.4 Consultation will be undertaken between April and August to inform a new Equalities and Inclusion Strategy. It is proposed that this will be reported to Cabinet in September.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The information included in the self-assessment, case studies and supporting documentary evidence was drawn from a range of sources from across the Council.

- 7.2 The process has also involved identifying activities that demonstrate good practice on equality and working with activity leads to gather more detailed information on how these initiatives have delivered positive outcomes for local people, particularly those that are most vulnerable and may experience exclusion.

## **8 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

- 8.1 This report is for information, and therefore was not reported to Scrutiny & Overview Committee in advance.

## **9 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 9.2 The Equality Framework for Local Government report will be published in an electronic format and will not incur a publication cost to the Council.

### **The effect of the decision and risks**

- 9.3 This report is for information and will therefore have no effect on the current policies or budget of the council. Action has been delivered in accordance with the risk management process.

### **Future savings/efficiencies**

- 9.4 There are no savings or efficiencies associated with the approval of this report.

Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance Investment and Risk, Finance Investment and Risk

## **10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that there are no direct legal considerations arising from the recommendations in this report.

Approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 11.1 Equality is integral to our workforce processes, policies and practices, including becoming an employer of choice. We continue to make positive progress towards having a workforce that reflects its community and where inclusivity is embedded in our practice, though it is recognised that there is more to do.

Approved by Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 12.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. It must exercise of all its functions, "have due regard to" the need to the need to comply with the three arms or aims of the general equality duty.
- 12.2 This report will not have any disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more protected characteristics.
- 12.3 The Equality Framework for Local Government Accreditation will help the Council to deliver on the public sector equality duty (PSED). The process will help the council in review and improve its performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- 12.4 The EFLG process will help the Council to identify what we do well and where we can make improvements to and deliver better equality outcomes for staff, residents and service users. This will also help the Council meet its Corporate Plan priority to abolish inequality.

Approved by Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

## **13. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 13.1 There are no environmental issues arising out of this report.

## **14. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 14.1 There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report

## **15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 15.1 To support the Council to demonstrate its transparency and fairness in its operations as well as compliance with its public sector equality general duty and specific duties as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

## **16. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 16.1 This report is for information. Further reports are proposed to provide further detail and develop strategy and objectives for approval.

## **17. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 17.1 This report does not involve processing of 'Personal' Data'. Therefore no data protection impact assessment (DPIA) has been completed.

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager Ext. 63265

**APPENDICES:** Appendix 1 – Croydon EFLG Presentation [Initial LGA Feedback ]

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None