

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities jointly with Assistant Chief Executive & Director of Public Health

[21/08/19]



Subject: Public Consultation on Council Equality Objectives 2019-2023

Report of: Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health

Relevant Cabinet Member: Councillor John Cotton, Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities

Relevant O & S Chair(s): Councillor Carl Rice, Chair of Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Report author: Suwinder Bains, Cohesion and Equalities Manager

Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Birmingham City Council is determined to, and has a legal duty to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across all its policies, programmes and services.
- 1.2. The council is refreshing its equality objectives for 2019 – 2023. These objectives aim to drive equality and inclusion across all areas of the council's

work, as well as demonstrate the council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.3. This report recommends five draft equality objectives, each one of which will support the council's vision for a fairer council and City:

- Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape policy and practice across the Council
- Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership and a clear organisational commitment to being a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the City
- Involve and enable our diverse communities to play an active role in civic society and put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision-making.
- Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible and inclusive to individual's needs and respects cultural differences.
- Encourage and enable a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equality and inclusion in everything we do.

1.4. The council is planning to conduct a public consultation on its refreshed equality objectives 2019-2023.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To seek approval to publish the refreshed draft equality objectives 2019 - 2023 for consultation with council employees, trade unions, partners and communities
- 2.2 Note that following the consultation, a further report will be produced for Cabinet to adopt the Equality Objectives 2019 – 2023 as part the council's commitment to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to publish at least one equality objective every four years.
- 3.2 In compliance with the Act, the council is refreshing its objectives which were first published in 2014.
- 3.3 Equality objectives should be viewed as part of the council's business planning process, aligned to council priorities and integral part of business performance. These objectives support the delivery of our Council Plan and demonstrate our commitment to addressing inequality and promoting fairness, diversity and inclusion

4 Proposed Equality Objectives

- 4.1 The proposed equality objectives have been developed by drawing on the council's current policies combined with an equality gap analysis and workforce

equality data. The following equality objectives 2019 – 23 are being proposed for consultation:

- Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape policy and practice across the Council.
- Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership and a clear organisational commitment to being a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the City.
- Involve and enable our diverse communities to play an active role in civic society and put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision-making.
- Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible and inclusive to individual's needs and respects cultural differences.
- Encourage and enable a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equality and inclusion in everything we do.

4.2 The public and internal staff consultation will seek views on the proposed equality objectives and associated actions. Analysis of the responses will shape the council's equality objectives 2019-2023.

5 Options considered and recommended option

5.1 Option 1: The council could decide not to consult on the refreshed equalities objectives. This is not recommended, as it would mean the council has not demonstrated due regard to the general equality duty.

5.2 Option 2: The council will consult on the proposed equality objectives to demonstrate transparency and accountability. The proposed equality objectives are attached at appendix one.

5.3 Option 2 is recommended: to prepare and publish draft equality objectives for internal and external consultation.

6 Consultation

6.1 Neither the Equality Act 2010 nor the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (the regulations impose the duty to publish the equality objectives) require councils to consult on the objectives before they are published; therefore there is no statutory duty to consult.

6.2 However, wider internal and external consultation will help inform the formulation of our objectives, as well as ensure that we fulfil our duty to consult as a matter of fairness and transparency.

- 6.3 The council's Corporate Management Team and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities have been consulted on the equality objectives.
- 6.4 Consultations will be held with trade unions, council employees, voluntary and community organisations, elected members and strategic partners. It is proposed that the consultation runs from 2nd September 2019 to 28th October 2019. Analysis and evaluation of consultation responses will take place during November 2019.
- 6.5 The methods of consultation will include: internal communication channels, the council's BeHeard consultation portal, stakeholder briefings, and workshops.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 There is a risk that consultation will not be inclusive, delivered or managed effectively. To manage this risk the consultation plan will be informed by engagement with staff networks and equality groups. All relevant stakeholders will be invited to respond to the consultation.

8 Compliance Issues

8.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

- 8.1.1 The proposed equality objectives are aligned to the Council Plan and the Community Cohesion Strategy for Birmingham.

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 The council has a statutory duty to refresh its equality objectives in accordance with regulation 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011("regulations "), the council must prepare and publish at least one equality objective once every four years.

8.3 Financial Implications

- 8.3.1 Consultation on the equality objectives will be delivered within existing budgets.

8.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

- 8.4.1 Not applicable.

8.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

- 8.5.1 The consultation will involve the support of the Human Resources team for internal staff consultation.

8.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

- 8.6.1 The nature of the proposal as outlined in this report is to help advance equality, diversity and inclusion. The consultation process will enable the

council to comply with its obligations under the Equality Act (General and Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

9 Appendices

9.1 Draft Equality Objectives 2019 - 2023 – appendix 1