

CABINET – 29 JANUARY 2013

EQUALITY POLICY 2012-17: ANNUAL UPDATE

Report by the Research and Major Programmes Unit Manager

Introduction

1. This report sets out the Council's progress in the first year of the 'Equality Policy 2012-2017', approved by Cabinet on 13 March 2012.
2. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to set and publish specific, measurable equality objectives, which was fulfilled in the 'Equality Policy'. The Council has to report at least annually on its progress towards these objectives, and must regularly provide information about actual and potential service users.

Objectives and Actions

3. In the 'Equality Policy', the Council set out four objectives:
 - Objective 1: Understanding the needs of individuals and communities
 - Objective 2: Providing accessible, local, and personalised services
 - Objective 3: Supporting thriving and cohesive communities
 - Objective 4: Promoting a culture of fairness in employment and service delivery
4. For each objective, specific priority actions for the year were set out in the 'Equality Policy' that were intended to meet them.

Performance

5. There were 27 priority actions set out in the 'Equality Policy' Completed actions are scored below as 'achieved'. Actions that are in progress with no cause for concern are scored as 'on-going', as are actions relating to new ways of carrying out the Council's functions to meet the equality objectives.

Objective 1: 5 actions – 4 achieved, 1 on-going

Objective 2: 10 actions – 5 achieved, 5 on-going

Objective 3: 5 actions – 4 on-going, 1 replaced

- The action that was replaced referred to developing and promoting the Mantra service for reporting hate crime. This service has since been replaced by a hate crime reporting system run by Stop Hate UK.

Objective 4: 7 Actions – 2 achieved, 5 on-going

6. The update does not set out new priority actions for the forthcoming year. As detailed below, these will be published in April to align with the Council's regular performance reporting calendar.

Information on actual and potential users

7. The council is also obliged to regularly publish information about the characteristics held by both actual and potential users of its services. The 'Equality Policy 2012-2017' contained an extensive appendix detailing what was then known about users of the Council's services and relevant demographic data about the residents of Oxfordshire.
8. With the release of data from the 2011 Census, the opportunity has been taken to publish an update on the demographics of Oxfordshire residents, and this is included as an appendix to the report. An update on the characteristics of service users will be included in the next update.

Further releases

9. The Council is obliged to report on its progress against the 'Equality Policy' on an annual basis. However, the current timetable does not align with the Council's regular performance reporting cycle. Therefore, new priority actions for the four equality objectives will be agreed with the council's directorates for the next financial year and published in April 2013, with the report on the council's progress against them being published the following March. This will allow the Council and its directorates to synchronise the equality actions within their regular reporting cycles.

Equality Implications

10. By definition both the 'Equality Policy 2012-2017' and the first annual update are intended to have a positive impact on all groups that share protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. There are no financial or staffing implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) **Accept the first update on the 'Equality Policy 2012-2017'**
 - (b) **Agree to the adjustment of the reporting timetable for future updates on the 'Equality Policy 2012-2017'**

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Background papers: None

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