

From: Mike Hill Cabinet Member for Community Services
Mark Dance Cabinet Member for Economic Development
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To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 15 September 2015

Subject: **Annual Equality and Diversity Report**

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None
Future Pathway of Paper: Annual report also submitted to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 16 September 2015

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report sets out a position statement for services within the Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) Directorate regarding equality and diversity work and progress on KCC Equality objectives for 2014/15.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note current performance and agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1. Introduction

1.1 Publication of equality information is compulsory in England for all public authorities. Proactive publication of equality information ensures not only compliance with the legal requirements, but transparency for the public in how this Directorate ensures Equality and Diversity considerations are part of every stage of our programmes and projects.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 There are no financial implications in producing an annual report.

3. Policy Framework

3.1 Advancing equality and reducing socio-economic inequalities in Kent contribute towards the Council's three overarching strategic outcomes; children and young people in Kent to get the best start in life; Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life; and older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.

3.2 The council published its equality objectives in 2011/12, which were then revised in 2014/15. Each service was asked to provide equality information and

to demonstrate how they complied with equality legislation between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, and what performance measures they have in place to achieve the KCC Equality Objectives.

4. Key Achievements and Lessons Learned

- 4.1 Appendix A provides a comprehensive assessment of GET's performance against KCC's Corporate Equality and Diversity objectives. Below are some of the key achievements and lessons learnt from this review
- 4.2 In 14/15 we launched a major **Customer Service Review** with the aim of delivering consistent customer service aligned to the principles in the Corporate Customer Service Policy. In-depth analyses have been taking place across the Directorate in the following areas; Speed Awareness, Coroners Service, Highways fault reporting, Online licences and the GET Priority Response Enquiries. The purpose is to gather evidence of how we currently deliver customer service with a view to highlighting areas for improvement and sharing best practice. Equality and Diversity considerations are an intrinsic element of this work.
- 4.3 In **Libraries, Registration and Archives**, the 'Touch a New World' scheme has loaned iPads to homebound customers, enabling these customers to have the same digital opportunities as residents who can physically access our libraries. The service has provided support on how to use the iPads and understand their full potential. The project was launched in September 2013 and to date, 26 housebound customers had completed the training, with five customers receiving training and five more waiting to start. Doris, a 95 year old service user said "I can't get out much so this is a very convenient way of keeping in touch with my family and friends. I don't feel so isolated, the world can come into my life. Now that I am 95 I can't do what I did. I used to love travelling but with the iPad I can explore the world from my armchair. Doris also plays games like Sudoku and Scrabble against other on-line users. She says, "It keeps your mind active, it has given me my independence. I can share pictures and keep in touch with my great grandchildren."
- 4.4 Over the last year, **Highways and Transportation** (HT&W) has begun to gather better information about the equality aspects of complaints and compliments. HT&W is also working closely with Corporate Communications to better target those customers who prefer not to use digital channels, through differently designed media campaigns, as well as seeing how vulnerable customers, such as the elderly, can be reached by asking their friends, family and neighbours to assist them in reporting highway issues that might be affecting them.
- 4.5 In the last year, **waste management** has engaged with equality and diversity groups across Kent on potential barriers or improvements that could be made at Household Waste and Recycling Centres. The work produced a set of recommendations on future improvements which will now be implemented in a phased approach.

- 4.6 Lessons have been learned from HTW's Safe and Sensible Street Lighting Project and the Division has committed to improve the EqIA process for the new LED Procurement Project, working even more closely with the corporate equalities team to ensure that all requirements are being met.
- 4.7 **Environment, Planning and Enforcement's** Sport and Physical Activity Service has co-developed and co-led Project 500; a campaign to address the imbalance of male to female sports coaches, creating a more diverse workforce to drive the growth of female participation in sport. This project won the County Sports Network's National Impact Award for 2014.

5. Governance

- 5.1 Following an internal audit in 2012 governance arrangements across the authority were agreed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Governance is based on decisions having an EqIA at both Departmental Management Team and Member levels. If decisions are taken without full equality analysis the authority is open to potential Judicial Review.
- 5.2 The Directorate has an overarching Equality and Diversity Group, chaired by the Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement. This group has moved to meeting every six weeks in 2015/16, with a clear focus on:
- ensuring equality and diversity are embedded into every stage of the commissioning cycle – analyse, plan, do, review
 - overseeing evidenced Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken for all priority programmes and projects as laid out in the 15/16 Business Plan, including service redesign and transformation
 - maintaining appropriately trained staff to ensure the Directorate meets our Equalities duties efficiently and effectively

Details of the above approach are included in Appendix B of this report.

6. Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note current performance and agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

7. Background Documents

None

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Performance against key questions / areas

Appendix B – GET Approach to Equality and Diversity for 2015/16

9. Contact details

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