

Subject: GET's contribution to the Corporate 2016/17 Equality and Diversity Review

Summary

As part of the County Council's demonstration of how we meet our responsibilities against the Equality Duty 2010, an annual KCC Equality and Diversity Review is produced. This GET report, as with other Directorates, is shaped against the 2012 – 2016 KCC Equalities Strategy as that was the corporate strategy until December 2016.

This paper was pulled together focusing on projects and programmes identified in the GET 202016/17 Business Plan and the Divisions' 202016/17 Projects Registers.

1. Working with all our partners to define and jointly address areas of inequality

- 1.1. KCC's Procurement Team has a clearly stated policy to "ensure there is equality analysis for every specification to cover any additional needs required to complete the contract and promotion of equality in procurement". The template the Procurement Team uses to assess all planned procurement explicitly asks the service whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is required, and emphasises the role of the service in completing one.
- 1.2. As part of the 2016/17 review, officers at all levels and across all four GET Divisions referred frequently to awareness and understanding of the existence and the relevance of the two interacting Procurement and Equality policies.
- 1.3. Examples from 2016/17 where GET services have proactively worked with partners to define and jointly address areas of inequality include;
 - a. Thanet Parkway outline design stage, which additionally complies with the Department for Transport's Design Standards for Accessible Stations
 - b. The majority of KCC's Local Growth Funded Local Transport Schemes are designed and built by Amey Highways and Amey TESC. In addition to KCC's procurement process, each individual scheme has its own EqIA which identifies and defines any areas of inequality that require to be addressed by delivery partners
 - c. Road traffic casualty reduction where partners included Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, and Highways England, to tackle particularly the impact on age and sex characteristics
 - d. Folkestone Seafront regeneration where partners were Buro Happold, Folkestone Harbour Board and Graham Construction. The EqIA identified the disability characteristic as a key consideration

- e. The Active Travel Strategy, which was developed and consulted upon in 2016/17. Cycling stakeholders including Sport England and British Cycling provided further evidence around the disproportionately low number of women who choose to cycle in the county (and indeed nationally), leading to some specific actions being written into the strategy.

2. Promoting fair employment practices and creating an organisation that is aware of and committed to equality and diversity and delivers its Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.1. In 2016/17, Highways, Transportation and Waste (HTW) have undertaken an EqIA on the impact on staff of changing the delivery model of a major programme, the Highway Term Maintenance Commission. Whilst restructures and service transformation are informed by an EqIA, it is a new development to apply an EqIA to a potential change in a delivery model. The EqIA identified a number of simple alterations to engaging with staff around the potential models, and has resulted in very positive engagement from affected staff with the process to date.
- 2.2. GET brings together its Organisational Development and Equality & Diversity Groups on a quarterly basis to support the Directorate to work on fair employment practice and ensuring a diverse workforce. In 2016/17 this joint group,
 - a) positioned diversity as integral to the future workforce planning;
 - b) delivered a peer review of national employers recognised as delivering 'Excellence in Diversity' to apply learning to GET's own organisational development approach, including staff groups;
 - c) commissioned face to face equality impact assessment training for senior managers, to achieve leadership across the Directorate on this element of customer insight;
 - d) analysed GET staffing data to understand how the protected characteristics of GET's staffing reflects the protected characteristics of Kent's population. This has informed a commission of the KCC Engagement, Organisation Design and Development Division to determine how the protected characteristics are profiled across GET's recruitment, leadership, leavers, Total Contribution Pay, Part Time, apprentices, cash awards and capability procedures; and
 - e) commissioned protected characteristic analysis within GET's 2016/17 Employee Value Proposition monitoring, which now informs the work of both Groups.

3. Improving the way KCC listens to and engages with its employees, communities and partners to develop, implement and review policy and to inform the commissioning of services.

- 3.1. To inform the KCC Active Travel Strategy which GET has led, two stakeholder workshops were held in 2016/17 ahead of a wider public consultation. The stakeholder workshops were subdivided into infrastructure stakeholders, education stakeholders (thereby ensuring the age characteristic was considered), health provider

stakeholders, and older and disability stakeholders (thereby ensuring age and disability characteristics were considered).

- 3.2. To maximise the impact on young entrepreneurs, The Kent Foundation project collected equalities data about their Volunteer Business Mentors to maximise the diversity of the mentor pool to in turn provide the best match for the young entrepreneurs.
- 3.3 For the least mobile elderly or disabled customers, or those with young children or other carer responsibilities, the action plan that came out of the Mobile Library Service's EqlA delivered an improved alternative offer from 2016/17 onwards. The home library service involves volunteers visiting customers in their own home and delivering books for them to read. This ensures access to the service is maintained but that customers still keep a valued social interaction, in this case through a volunteer.
- 3.4 The libraries service works with West Kent Communities (part of West Kent Housing) to manage and delivers its extensive volunteer programme. From joint analysis of current volunteers; a proportionate lack of young people, especially young men, those from a BME background, and disabled volunteers was established. The service has since identified a new targeted and proactive approach to reach these particular groups, with a view to strengthening the diversity of service volunteers.

**4. Improving the quality, collection, monitoring and use of equality data as part of the evidence base to inform service design delivery and policy decision.
Consistent and clear standards in the use of data in defining service need and managing the performance of services.**

- 4.1 Heritage Lottery Fund requires protected characteristic data to be collected, and linked targets reached, with a number of the projects they fund within GET's Countryside Partnerships service. Primarily this is against the characteristics of age, ethnicity, gender and disability.
- 4.2 Similarly, Sport England requires age, gender, disability and race data to be collected, and linked targets reached, with a number of the projects they fund within GET's Sport and Physical Activity service. As a result of such data capture in previous years, certain programmes in 2016/17 were able to draw down additional funding per participant if those participants were disabled, female or of a minority ethnic group.
- 4.3 For Economic Development's East Kent and Kent Downs & Marshes LEADER Programmes, the gender and age profile of applicants is monitored, and successful applicants in turn monitor the age, gender and disability profiles of those who secure the jobs created. These characteristics are as selected by the Rural Payments Agency.
- 4.4 GET services and GET's Equality and Diversity Group proactively informed the development of a new KCC EqlA template, to ensure more accurate completion, and to engender greater use of the EqlA as a service tool.
- 4.5 A new process to deliver a greater number and more considered EqlAs was embedded within GET in 2016/17, led by the GET Customer Service Programme in

tangent with the KCC Corporate Lead for Equality and Diversity. The new process involves two formalised review points before an EqlA is 'signed off', as well as one shared online portal for all GET EqlAs within a wider KCC EqlA repository. The GET EqlAs are now openly available to all, and are subjected to an overview quarterly analysis which enables the Directorate to identify and share best practice, common challenges, and projects and programmes where the EqlAs are outstanding.

4.6 Through cross-Directorate work in 2016/17, GET identified and assumed lead responsibility for five Equality objectives in the new KCC 2016 – 2020 Equalities and Human Rights Policy. An action plan has been developed with the relevant services for the following objectives:

- a) The protected characteristics of all members of a community will be considered when investing in roads, facilities and utilities that are identified through the Growth and Infrastructure Framework, and delivered to meet the needs of Kent's population changes
- b) Irrespective of Age, Disability, Race or Religion and Belief, Kent residents should be able to access our county's high quality landscapes and environment
- c) The Libraries, Registration and Archives Service in Kent will continue to understand its local communities' needs, and tailor its services accordingly
- d) The Equality Duty will inform all services' efforts to maximise businesses' potential

4.7 A programme of agreed EqlAs, sampling and other monitoring approaches has been established for 2017/18, which will inform whether any further objectives targeted at certain protected characteristics will be required for 2018/19.

5. Providing inclusive and responsive customer services through; Understanding our customers' needs; Connecting with our customers effectively and efficiently; Empowering staff to meet service expectations; Improving access to services; Working with our partners to improve our customer experience.

5.1. GET routinely captures protected characteristic data as part of all of our public consultations. Examples from 2016/17 where this has then influenced the service our customers received include:

- a) A toucan crossing and bus stops being relocated from the positions consulted upon, in order that they can be of use to younger road users seeking to get to school (age characteristic)
- b) A disabled access ramp being installed at East Farleigh, and a disabled access fishing peg (platform) being installed at Barming, both as part of Public Rights of Way improvements (disabled and carers characteristic)
- c) Minimum stopping times for mobile libraries being extended from ten minutes to 30 minutes (age, disabled, maternity and carers characteristics)
- d) Adjusted times for stops for school children as a result of feedback to ensure that mobile library stops will be at a time the school can use (age characteristic).

5.2. As an integral part of our Customer Service Programme, GET has continued to seek to deliver responsive customer services by proactively engaging with community groups that represent the interests of one or more protected characteristics. Examples from 2016/17 include:

- a) Gravesham Access Group regarding a proposed shared use cycle route (disability characteristic)
- b) Local schools around Tonbridge Railway Station (age characteristic)
- c) Guide Dogs for the Blind regarding Active Travel Strategy (disability characteristic)
- d) Hi Kent regarding the roll out of wifi to all libraries (disability characteristic)
- e) Kent Women in Business regarding business loans programmes (sex characteristic)
- f) Good Day Programme regarding Dartford Library and Museum (disability characteristic)

5.3. Awareness of the KCC 'About You' process to collect customer insight including protected characteristics has somewhat improved since 2015/16. This is supplemented by a number of other tools across GET which provides valuable intelligence on various customer groups. These include Mosaic, Nomisweb, Census, and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data sets.

5.4 By utilising 'About You' Libraries, Registration and Archives have engaged with many more members of the public who identify themselves disabled, and are actively participating in the library provision/are registered members. However, actual Library membership which seeks to capture protected characteristic data shows disabled membership to be lower than is now believed. The Service is examining how to more accurately profile its membership, in order to better inform future service planning.

5.5 Volunteers supporting GET services have on a number of occasions in 2016/17 been of a minority ethnic background with only developing fluency in English. Services including Countryside Partnerships have adapted the approach to their environmental and conservation tasks to ensure this protected characteristic (race) is fully included within any project. Trading Standards have within 2016/17 and previous years also worked with customers (businesses) of a minority ethnic background with only developing fluency in English, and similarly have had to adapt their approach to ensure such businesses are able to understand and follow the advice, guidance and any investigatory processes applicable.

5.6 No complaints relating to any of the nine protected characteristics or any quality and diversity issue were reported in 2016/17 to any GET service.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1. As with the 2015/16 Review, this Report was pulled together on a 'no blame' approach, where all programme/project owners were encouraged to be honest in their responses, rather than attempt to demonstrate equalities considerations if there had

been very little or none. The information that underpins this report allows GET to have an accurate understanding of our equalities 'baseline' performance.

- 6.2. The GET Equality and Diversity Group has a 15 month work programme for January 2017 to March 2018 that is mapped against the LGA Equality Framework for Local Government. This allows GET to evidence continuous improvement from 'Developing' within five categories that underpin the Framework; Knowing your Communities; Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment; Involving Your Communities; Responsive Services and Customer Care; and A Skilled and Committed Workforce. GET is the only KCC Directorate to be working in this way.