

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

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To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee – 24 September 2014

Subject: Annual Equality and Diversity Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Annual report

Electoral Division: All divisions

Summary: This report sets out a position statement for services within the Education and Young People's Service (EYPS) Directorate regarding equality and diversity work and progress on KCC Equality objectives for the year 2013/14.

Recommendation(s):

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i) note the current performance in relation to priorities;
- ii) note the actions to ensure that equality governance is observed in relation to decision making;
- iii) note the proposed changes to Equality Objectives; and
- iv) agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

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 also greater understanding by the public of the difficult decisions an authority faces, and why it takes those decisions. Gathering equality information and using it to inform decision-making can also enable authorities to achieve greater value for money in the services they deliver through better targeting of services.

2. Financial Implications

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

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

3.1 Advancing equality and reducing socio-economic inequalities in Kent contributes towards Council's Medium Term Plan, 'Bold Steps'. The Equality Objectives were developed drawing on the council's. As such the objectives correspond with existing council priorities and the objectives support the

aims of, helping the Kent economy to grow, putting the citizen in control and tackling disadvantage.

- 3.2 Bold Steps for Education Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2014-17 is the key strategic plan for Education and Young People's Services (EYPS) in Kent. The evolution of this plan and its priorities came from a range of discussions that were held with Headteachers, governors and other public sector partners to determine where Kent learning institutions need to be in relation to ever improving education and learning outcomes. The Plan established shared ambitions and agreed a range of rapid priority improvements up to 2017. These ambitions and strategic priorities for Education and Young People's Services are based on a rigorous analysis of current performance and challenging expectations for future improvements.
- 3.3 The council published its equality objectives in 2011/12. Each service was asked to provide equality information and to demonstrate how they complied with equality legislation between 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014, and what performance measures they have in place to achieve the KCC Equality Objectives.

4. Key Achievements

- 4.1 Kent's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy, launched in January 2014, anticipates the statutory changes for children and young people with SEN (Special Educational Needs) and or who are disabled aged between 0-25 and their families and carers. We are creating more capacity in mainstream schools to support pupils in their local communities, through the development of SEN resourced provisions in a number of schools, embedding the Kent Core Standards in every school and ensuring that there is good access to workforce development and training through the specialist support available at the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meetings which supports schools in each district.
- 4.2 More than 20 schools, early years settings and colleges are participating in a multi-agency pilot working towards externally accredited Inclusion Awards which will establish a culture of inclusive practice for other providers to follow from 2015. We have undertaken public consultation to increase capacity to support Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Behavioural Emotional and Social Needs (BESN) at Furness and Goldwyn Special Schools, and we have consultation plans in place to increase unit places for speech and language impairment, ASD and satellite provision attached to special schools for severe and complex needs.
- 4.3 The capital programme to expand the number of places in Special schools has already rebuilt or refurbished 14 schools in Kent. Investment continues to bring similar transformation to the remaining 10 schools. This programme will result in an additional 500 Special school places in the County.
- 4.4 Free early education became a statutory entitlement for eligible two years olds from 1 September 2013, with the local authority having a duty to secure provision. Around 20% of two years olds were eligible for free early education from September 2013. The programme will be extended from September 2014 to include around 40% of two years olds. KCC was given a target to secure 3,095 Free for Two places by September 2013 with an increase to

6501 places by September 2014 (this being the second largest target nationally). The target to develop 3095 places was achieved by September 2013 and the progress on the target of developing 6501 places is ongoing.

- 4.5 In 2013, 177 Primary schools and 43 Secondary schools narrowed the FSM achievement gaps. Further narrowing of attainment gaps is indicated by the provisional Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and GCSE results for 2014. We are taking active steps to disseminate this best practice. All Senior Improvement Advisers (SIAs) and Heads of Service are clear which schools which demonstrate best practice and which schools need to improve and they will match support. All SIA's, Area Education Officers (AEO's), and Heads of Service will submit case studies of schools in their districts that have significantly narrowed the gap
- 4.6 Looking at the January 2013 and 2014 data it can be seen that participation for post 16 Year 12 vulnerable learners has increased by 3.1%. This modest improvement is encouraging as it reflects the impact of the increased focus on supporting vulnerable young people by KCC, in particular through the 14-24 Skills and Employability Strategy, the SEN Review, the PRU review, the reorganisation of Early Help and Preventative services and the Troubled Families programme.
- 4.7 A full report on what has been achieved in Education and Young People's Services over 2013/14 can be seen in Appendix 1.

5. Governance

- 5.1 In 2012 governance arrangements were agreed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) following an internal audit. Governance is based on decisions having an EqlA at both Departmental Management Team and Member levels. If decisions about service changes and provision are taken without full equality analysis the authority is open to potential Judicial Review
- 5.2 KCC continues to use EqlAs to capture and evidence our analysis on the impact of our decisions and policies on the People of Kent. The Equality Act abolished the need for EqlAs but is clear on the need to undertake equality analysis in order to demonstrate that due regard has been paid to our Equality duties and KCC evidences this by way of an EqlA. EqlAs assess the impacts and or needs of policies, procedures and services on staff, Members and customers.
- 5.3 It has also been noted that there is no process in place regarding Officer decisions under delegated authority to ensure that Officers making decisions can evidence compliance with the Equality Act and the PSED. Arrangements are now being reviewed to ensure that all decisions have the outcomes of an equality analysis as part of the reports.

6 Future reporting

- 6.1 It is proposed that KCC revises and consults on its equality objectives during 2014/2015. The objectives will be incorporated in to the new Strategic Commissioning Plan and the accompanying Outcomes Framework so that KCC can embed equality monitoring in to the core performance framework.

6.2 This will result in greater compliance in relation to the delivery of organisational priorities and core services. Critically outcomes will be monitored through core performance management frameworks which will result in greater efficiency and accountability in relation to the delivery and outcomes of the objectives and services to customers. Performance monitoring is to be reported to the relevant Committees and this will meet the statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

6.3 Duplication will be reduced through streamlining KCC's equality duty by including public information within other published reports.

7 Legal Implications and Risk Management.

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the Council to publish its Equality Annual Report each year.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 There is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment because this paper reports performance monitoring on the previous year's work and internal governance arrangements.

9. Conclusion

The annual report has been able to identify progress on the relevant equality objectives. The Directorate can demonstrate that it provides accessible and usable services but it needs to continue to improve its governance arrangements and review how it communicates and provides information with service users.

10. Recommendations

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11. Background Documents

11.1 Kent County Council Equality Objectives.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-objectives>

12. Contact details

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