

**TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COUNCIL STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY
COHESION
6 OCTOBER 2014**

**LGA EQUALITY PEER REVIEW 2014/15 ACTION PLAN
Director of Corporate Services – Community Engagement and Equalities**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Executive Member for Council Strategy and Community Cohesion is asked to endorse the proposed action plan developed in response to the recommendations of the Peer Review report.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the draft action plan at Annex A be endorsed.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council asked the LGA to complete a re-accreditation of the Council “achieving” level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. The Equality Peer Challenge in March 2014 endorsed the Council’s attainment of the “achieving” level of the Framework.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 6 July 2014 the Executive endorsed the development of an action plan to respond to a number of recommendations made within the Peer Report to consolidate the Council’s “achieving” status.
- 3.3 Working on the Equality Framework for Local Government supports medium term objective 11 to seek to ensure that every resident feels included and able to access the services they need. It also enables the Council to demonstrate our compliance with our legal duties in the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations in the community.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The recommendations in the report from the peer reviewers closely reflect existing objectives for the Council therefore alternative action was not considered.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Equality Peer Challenge took place on 28 March 2014. The reviewers were Councillor Kay Hammond, Surrey County Council; Irena Hergottova, Walsall Borough Council and Gill Elliot, Local Government Association. The Council attained reaccreditation at the “achieving” level of the Equality Framework from this review.
- 5.2 The Peer Report referred to completing actions identified in the Council’s own self-assessment the report and also included areas of consideration under the equalities framework’s key headings:

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- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

5.4 These recommendations have been incorporated into an action plan to be delivered within reasonable timescales in order for activities to be integrated into services plans and for any associated costs to be met within existing council budgets. The action plan is attached at Annex A.

6 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

6.1 Nothing to add to the report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 Costs associated with the implementation of the actions arising from the peer challenge report will need to be met from existing council budgets.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 Working towards the identified actions in this action plan will help the Council address the areas for improvement in relation to the Council's approach to equalities both identified by our own self assessment and those highlighted by the Peer Report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 Not applicable. The report does not contain any recommendations impacting on strategic risk management issues.

7 **CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Equality Sub Group

Method of Consultation

7.2 Meetings and emails

Representations Received

7.3 Incorporated into report.

Background Papers

Equality Peer Challenge Report, 28 March 2014 (Annex B)
LGA Equality Peer Review 2013/14, Executive Report, 22 July 2014 (Annex C)

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Contact for further information

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EQUALITY FRAMEWORK PEER REVIEW 2014-15 ACTION PLAN

	Action	Source	Officer (Dept)	Target Date
2.1	Knowing your communities			
2.1.1	Improvement of data sharing across the organisation by promotion of 'Stat Share' and JSNA website vehicles.	Self Assessment	Head of Joint Commissioning (ASCHH) and Head of Performance and Partnerships (CEX)	March 2015 & ongoing
2.1.2	Reduce the Council wide equality information report for services to an Executive summary of the service-based report in 2014/15.	Self Assessment	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	January 2015
2.1.3	Provision of further guidance to Heads of Service to improve the monitoring of the 'All of Us' Equality Scheme.	Self Assessment	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	September 2014
2.1.4	Further interpret existing data to inform priorities, for example identified areas of inequality, by consolidating sources of data from across the organisation.	Self Assessment	Head of Performance and Partnerships (CEX) and Stat Share Group	September 2015 & ongoing
2.2	Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment			
2.2.1	Ensure SMART action plans are consistently included in EIAs to make sure adverse impacts are addressed for all 2015/16 budget reductions	Equality Peer Review Report	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	31 March 2015 & ongoing
2.2.2	Ensure all staff undertaking EIA training are guided to produce SMART action plans for both screenings and full EIAs.	Equality Peer Review Report	Head of Learning and Development (CS) and Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	31 March 2015 & ongoing

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	Action	Source	Officer (Dept)	Target Date
2.2.3	Give consideration to cumulative EIAs on savings or major service redesigns.	Equality Peer Review Report	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	31 March 2015, for all 2015/16 budget reductions and ongoing
2.2.4	Review training for Members to ensure that Members know how to use equality screenings and full EIAs to assist their decision making.	Equality Peer Review Report	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS) and Head of Democratic and Registration Services (CS)	September 2015, for all 2016/17 budget reductions and ongoing
2.2.5	Work with partners to harness the opportunities for developing skills and providing more local jobs through the regeneration of the town centre and other commercial developments.	Equality Peer Review Report	Assistant Chief Executive (CEX) and Business and Enterprise Manager (CEX)	March 2015 and ongoing
2.2.6	Work with the Elected Member for Economic Development and Regeneration to make links to other Council priorities and strategies.	Equality Peer Review Report	Assistant Chief Executive (CEX) / Business and Enterprise Manager (CEX)	March 2015 and ongoing
2.2.7	Support re-establishment of the voluntary and community sector forum and a system for representation in the VCS.	Self Assessment	Head of Performance and Partnerships (CEX) / Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	June 2015 and ongoing
2.2.8	Develop business engagement and establish mutually beneficial partnership between business and the community in areas such as volunteering, secondments, mentoring and employment opportunities for vulnerable groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise the Business Contact Programme to raise awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility and, where appropriate, signpost to the relevant agency or Council department. 	Self Assessment	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS) Business and Enterprise Manager (CEX)	September 2015 and ongoing
2.2.9	Continue to take positive action to improve the diversity of those participating in civic and public life.	Self Assessment	Head of Democratic and Registration Services (CS) and Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	March 2015 and ongoing

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	Action	Source	Officer (Dept)	Target Date
2.3	Community engagement and satisfaction			
2.3.1	Continue to improve the feedback provided to communities who engage with the Council through consultation and other engagement activity using the 'Have Your Say' consultation portal and other communication channels.	Equality Peer Review Report & Self Assessment	Head of Community Engagement & Equalities (CS)	November 2015 and ongoing
2.3.2	Measuring the impact of consultation and engagement on service development, commissioning and provision.	Self Assessment	Head of Joint Commissioning (ASCHH) and School Sufficiency and Commissioning Manager (CYP&L)	March 2015 and ongoing
2.4	Responsive services and customer care			
2.4.1	Develop the Council's Procurement Strategy to add more value to its contracts by bringing in Social value benefits where possible to any of its contracts, for example, the use of apprenticeships.	Equality Peer Review Report	Head of Procurement (CS)	March 2015 and ongoing
2.4.2	Develop a more consistent approach to the monitoring of contracts across the Council and learn from best practice in other local authorities.	Self Assessment	Head of Procurement (CS)	March 2016 and ongoing
2.5	A skilled and committed workforce			
2.5.1	Results of the staff survey to be disaggregated to consider issues like staff satisfaction by protected group characteristics.	Equality Peer Review Report	Human Resources Manager (CS)	September 2015
2.5.2	Consider what more could be done to assist in developing a workforce that is more representative of an increasingly diverse community within the Borough.	Equality Peer Review Report & Self Assessment	Chief Officer: Human Resources (CS)	March 2015