

Subject:	Equality & Inclusion Policy Review Proposal		
Date of Meeting:	5th October 2015		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Sarah Tighe-Ford	Tel: 29-2301
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 the council is required to set out and publish its equality objectives. Currently BHCC achieves this through the development and adoption of its corporate Equality & Inclusion Policy (2012-15) and underpinning action plan. The current policy is due for review by the end of this calendar year (2015). This is before the new Fairness Commission will have completed and reported its findings. For the policy to have most impact and relevance it should reflect the findings and recommendations of the Commission. Therefore the proposal is to delay the review and refresh of the Equality and Inclusion Policy and align it with the timetable for the Fairness Commission.
- 1.2 Stakeholders have agreed to this process in principle (see below), agreeing that having these corporate documents in alignment is valuable. In addition equality work and processes described by the policy will continue, ensuring the council can demonstrate that it is meeting its legal obligations and maintaining accessible services (including provision for staff).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the NCE Committee approves that the council continues to follow the existing Equality & Inclusion Policy
- 2.2 That the NCE Committee notes that a full report and new policy will be taken to full council for approval, linking the timetable for this to the Fairness Commission.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The council's Equality & Inclusion Policy was agreed at full council in 2012 and covers the period 2012-2015. It describes the council's vision in relation to equality, access and inclusion and details the corporate equality objectives.

- 3.2 All equality processes and activity are ongoing and will continue (such as Equality Impact Assessments, equality monitoring, service level equality actions and the groups that oversee progress).
- 3.3 The council will be assessed against the Equality Framework for Local Government in autumn 2016 and the Local Government Association (which runs this process) is satisfied with this recommended approach. In the proposed timeframe, the new policy will be complete by the time of the assessment.
- 3.4 The proposed review of the policy in 2016 will include consultation with relevant groups through Community Works.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 An alternative approach would be to redraft the Policy by the end of 2015, before the Commission reports. This risks not incorporating valuable data and feedback gathered during the Commission process. It also risks the policy priorities not aligning with those identified by the Commission, leading to resources being ineffectively allocated.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Informal discussions have been held with Community Works as the representative body of the community and voluntary sector and this recommended approach has been agreed in principle.
- 5.2 Fuller consultation on the content of the policy will be held as part of the revision process.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The corporate policy requires revision and, to be most effective and relevant, must be aligned to the findings of the Fairness Commission. Therefore the recommendation is that the timescale for review of the policy is linked to that of the Commission, with a review and revision during 2016 rather than in 2015.
- 6.2 After consultation, the full policy will be submitted to full council for approval.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The resources to support the review will be identified within existing budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 10/09/15

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Council's Equality and Inclusion Policy is a mechanism through which the Council can demonstrate and ensure that it meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The policy is one which the Council has chosen to take to full Council for approval.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 14th September 2015

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The purpose of the policy is to set out the council's vision and objectives for promoting, delivering, measuring and reporting progress on equality in the council and the city. Equality groups throughout the city will be consulted on the revised policy and the council will continue to report publicly on progress against the action plan underpinning it.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The council's Equality & Inclusion Policy contributes to and supports the principle of Equity & Local Economy.
- 7.5 Communities in which different groups of individuals face inequality and exclusion and/or where relations between groups are not good are unsustainable socially and economically and present both an immediate and long term financial, legal and reputational risk to the local authority.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

BHCC Equality and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015

