

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY 2017/18

I am pleased to report on my fourth year as Equality and Diversity Champion for the London Borough of Havering. I have continued to assist with raising the profile of groups that I visit, encouraging them to network with each other and helping to publicize what they offer to the community. A recent initiative undertaken was to get people in sheltered housing together with HASWA to learn more about what's going on in Queens Theatre and their immediate area.

The role of council champions complements the responsibilities of portfolio holders, and other councillors with designated responsibilities.

Council champions focus on their area of responsibility by:

- raising the profile and demonstrating the Council's commitment to the issue
- promoting effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders and community groups
- providing positive support, and on occasions constructive challenge, to officers in driving forward the Council's agenda on the issue

Equality

This means treating everyone with fairness and respect and recognising the needs of individuals. It is about addressing existing disadvantages affecting how people participate in society.

Diversity

This means recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, needs and experiences. It is also about encouraging and using those differences to create a cohesive community and effective workforce.

The Equality Framework for Local Government

This is a comprehensive explanation of what equality and diversity means: "An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

"An equal society recognises the people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be."

Thinking about diversity in addition to equality helps to take a broader view of disadvantage to include groups and sub-groups not specifically named in the law, and helps us to understand when disadvantage may be related to something other than the factors identified in law.

Almost a year on and many groups in Havering have been disappointed with unsuccessful bids through Ensemble Community Solutions which was established as a special purpose vehicle to apply for funding on behalf of its member organisations.. The unsuccessful bidders have been told that alternative funding must be sought as central government grants diminish to local authorities. This is very challenging for an organisation such as First Step Nursery where their work demands high ratios of staff to children.

I have always found that any organisations and groups I have visited, for example First Step, HAD, HASWA and the Partially Sighted Society have been most appreciative of a Havering councillor showing an interest in them and supporting them. I think it is very important that this part of our role, engaging and supporting groups is undertaken. I have been pleased for example have formed a strong bond with many of the groups and will always offer support where I can.

All these splendid groups have both committed staff and volunteers and could not carry out such a wide range of services without them. I thank them all for the work they are doing for the community of Havering.

The Council's commitment to Equality and Diversity (E&D) is set out in Fair to All Equality Policy, the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, Departmental Service Plans, the Equality Framework for Local Government, and the borough's forthcoming cohesion strategy. This report highlights the main achievements in 2017 – 2018, and sets out some of our plans for the year ahead.

Objective 1. Understanding the needs of Havering's diverse communities

The London Borough of Havering comprises of different individuals, families, community groups and lifestyles, but we are one Havering. The Council is committed to engaging all local communities in its decision-making processes and will endeavour to ensure everyone experiences a genuine sense of belonging, optimism, dignity and pride. The Borough's expanding diversity is a key strength, and this will be reflected in the forthcoming Community Cohesion Strategy (2018 – 2022); which acknowledges our differences, but quite deliberately, acknowledges and celebrates our many similarities and the fact that there's much more that unites than divides us as a borough and community. The principal objective of the Strategy will be:

'To nurture and promote a unified, caring, healthy and happy borough, where every individual experiences equal life chances, and where neighbours interact, respect, and value each other.'

The objective will be achieved through active partnership working with community and faith leaders, voluntary and statutory services, businesses, the police, schools

and colleges, pubs and clubs, and others. In support of this, internal Equality and Diversity staff training sessions have been opened up to local charities, so that there is a seamless understanding of the issues concerned and a shared understanding of what needs to be done. Local residents will be integral stakeholders and be invited to directly help to inform and grow the strategy as a living document.

The Community Engagement Forum will be launched in the summer of 2018. It will facilitate effective consultation and ensure local residents have the opportunity to fully engage in developing the strategy and influence decisions.

Accurate data is essential in helping us to understand the needs of our increasingly diverse borough, and the people who make it their home. The Data Hub is utilised by a range of authorised services; our goal is joined-up data collection and provision.

A series of internal conversations have been held with different departments with a view to improving the information that we collect and use in respect of the people we serve. The Housing department is key to these conversations, especially in respect of future major housing regeneration projects. We are particularly conscious of gaps in our current data pertaining to newer and 'hidden' communities; such as African, Asian, Faith and LGBT communities. Once launched, the recently proposed Community Diversity Forum will facilitate robust engagement and consultation with these community groups in the future.

Objective 2. Improving the life chances for all, particularly for the most vulnerable

Carrying out Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) is an important way to ensure public services are provided in a manner that is non-discriminatory, improves equality, and promotes equal life chances for all. This is now embedded best practice across all Council services. The purpose is to examine our plans, services and activities to see whether they are inclusive or not. If they are found to exclude any particular group, then service providers must show what they will do to mitigate the problem. The current paper-based EIA system will in the future become electronic to facilitate a more robust process. Strong consultation and data collection will remain integral to the process. The EIA process should be seen as an essential part of each project and not seen as a 'bolt on' at the end of a project.

The Council and its partners continue to provide support to people experiencing domestic violence in the borough through a variety of initiatives, such as:

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Project provides advice and support to domestic violence victims and their families living and working in Havering.

We continue to support **Junior Citizens** by building upon our success of previous years. More than 1600 pupils from year six classes across the borough learn to protect themselves from knife crime, drugs, and other potential dangers while taking part in the Junior Citizen Project, run by Havering Council and the Police. Junior Citizen was created out of a desire to educate young people at a crucial point in their educational and social development right before the move into secondary school.

The scheme has run for the past four years and is funded by MOPAC. It has proved very successful, based on student feedback and goes from strength to strength.

Objective 3. Remove Barriers to accessing the Council's Services

The translation and interpreting service remains in place and will do so for the foreseeable future. The related policy was refreshed in 2015 to reflect demographic changes and the Council entered into a new partnership arrangement with the Language Shop accordingly. There is a pan-London meeting concerned with the Language Shop which is attended by the Corporate Diversity Advisor who is responsible for monitoring the agreement.

Objective 4. Promoting Community Relations and Civic Pride

The development of the new Community Engagement Forum is intended to enhance community relations. There are also a series of community-facing projects that, if agreed, will do the same. Suggested projects include:

Pride in Havering Campaign; 100 Diverse Lives; Meet My Neighbour; Mentoring for Success; Skill Swap; Good Citizen Programme; Report It!; Havering Voices Choir; Creative Havering; Sporting Buddies; and the You and Me Diversity Challenge. Each project will have clear outcomes and success criteria and appropriate approval will be sought before they are actioned. g a. These projects will promote a united, cohesive community and give visibility and a voice to the borough's 'hidden' communities, including African, Asian, Disabled, LGBTQ, and minority communities of faith. It is envisaged that the projects will largely be developed within existing resources.

As with the planned Engagement Forum, the existing consultation policy aims to support a process of informed and transparent decision-making and planning by improving the quality and effectiveness of public consultation undertaken by or on behalf of the Council. The policy is supported by a series of Consultation Worksheets, which offer practical advice, templates and useful information for staff undertaking consultation. Together, the policy and worksheets will help to ensure that we:

- Have a consistent approach to consultation
- Have a clear set of standards and protocols
- Better co-ordinate consultations to reduce repetition, duplication and consultation fatigue
- Utilise new technologies and social media
- Better utilise resources, skills and expertise
- Make use of our networks and partnerships
- Co-design services with users
- Better engage with hard-to-reach groups
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation

- Improve the impact of consultation.

A new Voluntary Sector Strategy 2018 / 21 will be written this year. This will build on the focus of the existing Voluntary Sector Strategy which seeks to:

- Strengthen communities and to increase the effectiveness and impact of the voluntary sector so that it can support communities to be more resilient, by enabling neighbours, communities and families to support one another, and local people to take the lead on improving their local areas through voluntary action, and
- Improve local voluntary sector capacity to deliver quality local services that people need, and that new types of services, which best meet people's needs are developed with and by the sector hopefully through new models of delivery.

The Community safety and development team provided support in developing the Havering LGBT+ Forum, which is now fully established. Its purpose is to:

- Provide and maintain resources for Havering's LGBT+ communities including training, advice and support.
- Build effective relationships with individuals and groups in Havering and across London and Essex.
- Become a focal point for advice and consultation with service providers and departments within statutory organisations.
- Promote acceptance, equality, and understanding of Havering's LGBT+ communities.
- Challenge discrimination in all its forms against LGBT+ people.

The Rainbow Flag was flown at the front of the Town Hall for the first time to support LBGT History Month in February 2018.

Havering's Repeat Victim Project goes from strength to strength. Its purpose is to protect the most vulnerable members of our community from telephone scam calls. Over 70 residents now have call minder/protection equipment and over 16,000 telephone scams have been deflected as part of this project.

'Prevent' awareness (counter-terrorism) training has been rolled out departmentally and to the community. This included Prevent Training to foster carers, Havering transport staff, social services staff and Ward Panel Chairs.

Equalities and Diversity is now an embedded session regarding all new starters in induction sessions for the Council.

Equalities and Diversity will also feature after the May Council election for the induction of Councillors.

Taxi marshalls, street pastors, and well-trained supervisors continue to offer protection to people enjoying the borough's night-time economy.

Objective 5. Develop a diverse workforce that can respond to the needs of all our customer

One Source has agreed to work with the Corporate Diversity Advisor to incorporate equality in the staff induction programme. All revised and new HR policies and procedures will continue to be subject to scrutiny by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Policy Group. There is a strong proposal under consideration for the development of a Staff Diversity Forum, which, if formed, will play a useful role in helping to look at how we can better respond to the diverse needs of our customers.

Well trained staff is key to offering fair, inclusive services. The suite of e-learning and face-to-face training offered to staff includes:

- Equality Essentials (everything to do what equality and diversity means in a public service and community setting)
- Unconscious Bias (being aware of how our own biases affect decisions)
- Disability Aware (understanding everything disability)
- Challenging Behaviour (this training includes counter-terrorism learning)
- Equality Impact Assessments (how to complete them successfully)

So far over 200 staff have completed all modules.

With regard to the new training programme five class room based training sessions have been held with a total of 61 staff attending. This is delivered by the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Advisor.

Eight training sessions for Transport were delivered at Central Depot with 98 staff attending

There are further sessions arranged for each month going forward and they will be advertised in global news and the normal channels.

We are arranging to do sessions with all of Development Control. These will be scheduled in the next couple of months.

Once trained, all staff will be able to offer a better quality service to residents of the borough.

Objective 6. Embedding equalities into business as usual

Every manager and staff member is encouraged to see themselves as E&D champions. However, formal responsibility for the E&D agenda lies with the Community Safety and Development team and Corporate Diversity Advisor. She/he is responsible for:

- Advising on Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation

- Ensuring the Council is compliant with legislation and follows best practice
 - Advising on any E&D related queries and issues regarding both service users and staff members
 - Producing and overseeing the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan
 - Designing, delivering and commissioning E&D related training
 - Supporting EIAs and report writers to assess the equality implications and risks of their decisions, enabling decision-makers to make informed and evidence-based decisions
 - Managing The Language Shop translation and interpreting service for Havering
 - Over the past year the team has focused on mainstreaming the E&D agenda into all core processes of business while maintaining a high-profile corporate E&D function that meets the needs of customers and employees.
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- All service development, policies, and key decisions are now subject to an EIA. Cabinet and committee reports also consider relevant Equality and Social Inclusion implications. The EIA template, which is used to inform decision-making, has been improved to include socio-economics and health implications.

In conclusion

LB Havering is making good progress with its equality and diversity agenda, and the Council's commitment to this important policy will become much more visible in the months and years ahead. The proposal to seek to attain 'Excellence' status of the Equality Framework for Local Government is ambitious and welcome. This will involve the Council, its partners, and the whole community of Havering working together. Havering's work on equality and diversity is integral to making London greater.

Councillor Stephanie Nunn