

Subject: Equality Framework for Local Government

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 15th April 2009

Report of: Head of People and Policy

Portfolio

Holder: Customer Services

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To brief Cabinet on the new Equality Framework for Local Government.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)
- Well Managed Council (Improvement, Community Network)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 Since 2001 the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) has helped local authorities make real progress in mainstreaming equality issues in service delivery. However an equality performance and improvement framework also needs to respond to the challenges that councils face today, with new patterns of migration, changing demographics and changing expectations of customer service. Therefore from April 2009 the Equality Standard will change to the Equality Framework for Local Government.

4.2 The new assessment process and criteria is significantly more complex and stretching. Not only are we the Council required to demonstrate how we are meeting criteria with supporting evidence, it also requires the Council to illustrate how and what difference this will make, as well as giving greater focus on the perspective of stakeholders and community members on how the individual equality indicator criteria is being met.

4.3 The Standard has been revised in response to a number of significant developments:

- Launch of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Pending Single Equalities Bill , which will introduce a new 'single duty' on public bodies to tackle discrimination and promote equality for race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief and
- Introduction of new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection regime.

4.3 **The New Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)** has been designed to build on existing work by:

- Providing a simpler framework, reducing the amount of process and introducing a more outcome focused approach;
- Encouraging the use of the Framework so that it is proportional and relevant to the needs and circumstances of the authority;
- Simplifying the self assessment process backed by peer challenges;
- Integrating the public duties on race, disability and gender and providing a common performance framework compliance;
- Enabling local authorities and their LSP to identify and analyse equality priorities for inclusion in their LAAs and complementing the new the CAA;
- Allowing authorities to 'migrate' their achievements under the original Equality Standard.

4.4 The new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) will be launched at the beginning of 2009 for implementation from April 2009.

Areas for Assessment:

<u>Old Equality Standard for Local Government</u>	<u>New Equality Framework for Local Government</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate leadership • Stakeholder consultation • Improved service delivery • Diverse workforces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing your communities – equality mapping • Place shaping, leadership and organisation commitment • Community Engagement and satisfaction • Responsive services and customer care • A modern and diverse workforce

4.5 The number of specifically prescribed actions under each level has been reduced, but the scope significantly widened. Work done to date on the ESLG will automatically count towards the new EFLG. However, expectations are that requirements set out in the new criteria are far more challenging than previously (see Annex A for criteria of an ‘Achieving’ authority).

<u>Old Equality Standard for Local Government</u>	<u>New Equality Framework for Local Government</u>
Level 1 and 2	Emerging
Level 3	Achieving
Level 4	Moving towards Excellence ¹
Level 5	Excellence

4.6 The EFLG encourages critical self-assessment and peer challenge rather than external auditing. While challenging, we welcome the shift in focus for equality assessment.

¹ This classification is only intended to reflect the achievements of authorities at level 4 of the old Standard and will have to work towards excellence. Authorities at level 3 wishing to improve will have to achieve the Excellent level in the Framework.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 No financial obligations arising from the report, though levels of compliance will also be reviewed within the Use of Resources Assessment in the future.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 No legal obligations arising from the report.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 7.1 No HR implications, but there are equality implications which are detailed in the body of the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The new Framework poses significant changes and a different process of assessment as well as a greater requirement for the council to be able to demonstrate our commitment to equality and the impact/outcome this will have/has had. The Council has self assessed at Level 3 of the old Equality Standard and has therefore achieved its commitment set out in the Corporate Plan. However, for next year (2009/10) the Council will develop a model for peer review under the new Equality Framework criteria.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 Cabinet note the content of this report and the changes in criteria and requirements.
- 9.2 We will pursue the development of a self assessment process and peer review model based around the new Framework criteria with the Lancashire Equality Group once the final Framework is published by the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA).

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 N/A

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes / **No**

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached Yes / **No**

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes / **No**

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes / **No**

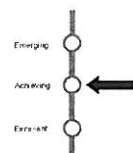
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No background papers

An Achieving Authority

An **Achieving** Authority has the following characteristics:

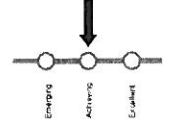
- members and officers take direct and personal responsibility for promoting greater equality and test themselves on progress by the outcomes they achieve
- it has undertaken equality mapping and used the information to inform corporate priorities
- it has set clear equality priorities in consultation with partners in the public and voluntary sector and these are reflected in its sustainable community and other relevant strategies, Local and Multi Area Agreements, and local targets
- it works with partners in the public and voluntary sector to develop joint equality strategies
- its equality strategy complements and is integrated into the community cohesion and migration and neighbourhood engagement strategies
- it has set appropriate corporate and service/unit objectives to address persistent inequalities related to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief for service delivery based on impact assessments and consultation with internal and external stakeholders and partners
- it has set appropriate corporate and service/unit employment and pay based objectives for race, gender, disability and age, religion and belief and sexual orientation
- equality objectives are integrated into the local authority's business and service planning processes
- there are good practices of delivery in all the sections of council with few adverse impacts found in impact assessments – where adverse impacts have been found these have been mitigated
- key stakeholders and community members are able to scrutinise and challenge performance on equalities issues
- it has developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to disaggregate data where appropriate, assess progress in achieving objectives and targets and review them if necessary.



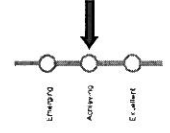
Achieving

1. In place and effective
2. In place, but needs improving
3. Currently being established
4. Not in place

	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.1 Relevant and appropriate information is gathered using a range of techniques, across all equality target groups, to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise.					<p><i>Are different techniques being deployed to gather data?</i></p> <p><i>How often is data gathered?</i></p> <p><i>Is national and regional data used and analysed?</i></p>		
2.2 Information and data is shared appropriately and as necessary across the authority and with partners in order to achieve equality outcomes.					<p><i>Are there information sharing protocols between partners?</i></p> <p><i>What information is available across partnerships?</i></p> <p><i>Is data disaggregated using the same or similar categories?</i></p> <p><i>How is the information being used to inform and achieve equality outcomes?</i></p>		



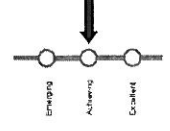
<p>2.3 Relevant and appropriate information and data is mapped, disaggregated and used to assess equality objectives.</p>				<p><i>Is information disaggregated and analysed on a regular basis? What changes have been made as a result?</i></p>		
<p>2.4 It is able to identify how their communities are changing and the impact this may have on service priorities.</p>				<p><i>What systems are in place to assess the changing nature of local communities? Is information from ward councillors gathered in a systematic way?</i></p>		



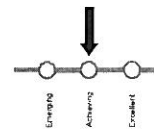
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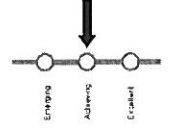
	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.5 Clear organisational and partnership equality priorities have been set and are owned and understood by all key stakeholders, including the third sector.					<i>Is there evidence of a link between equality schemes, equality objectives, business plans, and the corporate performance management system?</i> <i>What evidence exists to demonstrate challenge by all stakeholders?</i> <i>Does this challenge contribute directly to the development of the authority's targets and objectives?</i>		
2.6 Equality objectives and actions can be found in corporate and strategic plans.					<i>How have has this been cascaded down into service, team and individual plans?</i>		



<p>2.7 Equality and cohesion priorities and objectives are monitored regularly by the political leadership and senior management team</p>			<p><i>In what ways does the leadership demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate performance on achievement of equality objectives? Is equality integrated into performance management? Do members scrutinise EIAs and action plans which lead to major new policies or initiatives?</i></p>		
<p>2.8 It has allocated appropriate resources to achieve objectives.</p>			<p><i>Are the outcomes of all EIAs fed into service planning and corporate business planning processes? Are there clear links between EIAs and service improvements? How have targets been integrated into service plans? Have resource implications been properly assessed?</i></p>		
<p>2.9 It publishes the outcomes of EIAs on a regular basis.</p>			<p><i>Are action plans with objectives circulated to appropriate community, staff and stakeholders? Is information available on the website?</i></p>		



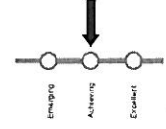
<p>2.10 Overview and Scrutiny processes address equality issues.</p>			<p>How do members scrutinise EIAs and action plans or other equality issues? Is progress on equality issues included in scrutiny reports?</p>		
<p>2.11 Work is being undertaken to promote equality of opportunity in terms of participation as elected representatives</p>			<p>How is the community being made aware of the opportunities that are available? Has any outreach work or public campaigns been undertaken?</p>		



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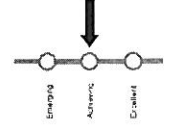
	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.12 Local public service priorities have been set alongside national ones which involve local people and their identified needs.					<i>Are there inclusive, open, and participative forums where community groups can participate?</i>		
2.13 Consultation with stakeholders and the third sector is systematically built into EIAs, the self assessment and planning processes.					<i>Are there processes and plans throughout all service areas to ensure stakeholder and third sector involvement in the planning and delivery of services?</i>		



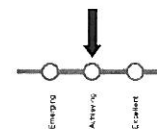
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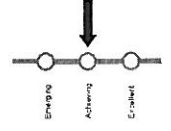
	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.14 A set of equality outcomes/objectives/goals has been produced at service/unit level to meet the needs of identified equality target groups.					<p>Are there clear links between EIAs and service improvements?</p> <p>Are EIAs of a consistent quality across the authority?</p>		
2.15 Equality objectives have been developed within each department/service area based on completed impact assessments and other equality data.					<p>Are the outcomes of all EIAs fed into service planning and corporate business planning processes?</p> <p>Are there targets with specific accountabilities and timescales?</p> <p>Are there indicators of how success will eventually be measured?</p>		



<p>2.16 Structures have been established at service/unit level to progress and monitor performance. Equality and cohesion objectives are monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams.</p>		<p><i>In what ways do portfolio holders and the DMTs continuously monitor, review and evaluate performance on achieving equality objectives? Is equality integrated into the corporate performance management framework?</i></p>	
<p>2.17 Appropriate resources have been allocated to achieve objectives.</p>		<p><i>How have targets been integrated into service plans? Have resource implications been properly assessed?</i></p>	
<p>2.18 Mechanisms are in place to ensure that equality objectives are delivered by contractors through contract management, and that they are monitored properly.</p>		<p><i>Are there monitoring requirements built into contracts to ensure equality issues are addressed? Is there evidence that provision is being monitored using quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the results considered and analysed by both contractor and client?</i></p>	



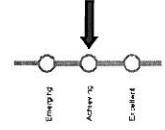
<p>2.19 The authority ensures that contractors, commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible.</p>			<p><i>How do authorities ensure that contractors grant receivers and others continue to meet the changing needs of clients? What is written into the contract? How is the contract managed over time to support good practice and continuing service improvement?</i></p>		
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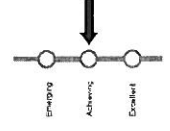
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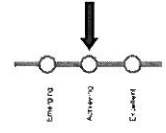
	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What do the stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.20 Workforce strategies address equality issues.					<i>How have equalities issues been integrated into all employment and development processes? Have particular areas been identified?</i>		
2.21 The authority has made significant progress on the equal pay review and reaching agreement with the unions.					<i>Has the review checked for equal pay gaps? Has a new pay structure been agreed, even if not all issues and gradings have been finalised? Have the new proposals been impact assessed? Has an offer been made to the unions in good faith? Are negotiations continuing where final agreement has not been reached? Have managers and employees received information about equal pay?</i>		



<p>2.22 It delivers a range of learning and development interventions to support members and officers to deliver equality outcomes.</p>		<p><i>Are different methods used to promote learning to a wide audience? e.g. standard courses, coaching, mentoring form part of member training and development?</i></p>		
<p>2.23 Employment objectives have been set based on internal monitoring information, the assessment of the local labour market and barriers.</p>		<p><i>Is there evidence that workforce data is analysed to help establish targets and objectives?</i></p>		
<p>2.24 Adverse trends resulting from the monitoring of employment data is acted upon.</p>		<p><i>Where workforce data indicates that targets are not being met are there appropriate examples of positive action to ensure targets can be met? Where evidence of disproportional activity is taking place what action is being taken to reverse the trends?</i></p>		



<p>2.25 Equality implications of management and individual appraisals have been considered.</p>					<p><i>How do appraisal processes ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities? How are employees made aware of equality objectives or any changes or improvements? Have they been impact assessed against all the equality strands?</i></p>		
<p>2.26 All employment procedures have been impact assessed.</p>					<p><i>Have they been impact assessed against all the equality strands?</i></p>		



Achieving - Improvement Action Plan

	We have identified the following areas for improvement	Priority 1-10 (1 is high)	Who?	Resources needed	Potential barriers	Potential solutions	How are we planning to involve stakeholders and community members?

