

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT**

**EQUALITIES**

**JULY 2017**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 it was agreed to set up a small group to review equalities and associated processes within the Council.
- 1.2 This small group consisted of Councillor Lythgoe, Councillor Essex and the Co-opted Member, Zieda Ali, with any other interested members asked to contact the Scrutiny Support Officer in post at that time. At later meetings, the Council's Equalities Champion was invited and kept up to date with minutes and agendas.
- 1.3 Officer support was provided by Jenni Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer, Clare Law, HR Manager, Sam Plum, Director of Communities and later in the process, Ray Kay, Policy and Performance Officer.
- 1.4 The remit of the group was discussed and was a very wide remit to begin with. Terms of reference were agreed and are attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. MEETINGS AND FINDINGS

- 2.1 Four meetings have taken place to date, with a final meeting planned for 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 to review the new Equalities Strategy before it begins the committee process.
- 2.2 The second meeting was attended by representatives from Chorley Council (Councillor Hasina Khan and Vicky Willett) who shared Chorley's practices and strategies. This contribution was very valuable and the Group would like to thank Chorley Council for their time and assistance.
- 2.3 The meetings started with a wide discussion regarding equalities and it was noted that the Equalities Strategy was out of date and required overhauling. The equalities processes in general were discussed and it was felt that the council could be doing more to engage with minority groups.
- 2.4 At the third meeting, after discussion, it was felt that the wider issue of consultation and engagement fell within the council's business planning process and that this was something that could be picked up by the Performance Management Task and Finish Group.
- 2.5 At the final meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 discussion too, place on the format and effectiveness of the neighbourhood forums. In consultation with officers, in particular the new Policy and Performance Officer, a timetable for delivery of a new equalities strategy was mapped out as follows:-
  - 4<sup>th</sup> September – Overview and Scrutiny
  - 20<sup>th</sup> September – Cabinet Agenda Setting
  - 11<sup>th</sup> October - Cabinet

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET**

3.1 The Equalities Task and Finish Group puts forward the following recommendations to Cabinet:-

1. That a new Equalities Strategy is produced and goes through the committee process to be approved at October's Cabinet.
2. That consideration is given to a review of the current Neighbourhood Forum arrangements, particularly with regards to engagement with minority and hard-to-reach groups.