

## MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/2012 REPORT NO. 82

**MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**  
Cabinet – 14<sup>th</sup> September  
2011

**REPORT OF:**

Director of Finance, Resources  
and Customer Services (Chair  
of Corporate Equalities Group)

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**Agenda – Part: 1**

**Item: 13**

**Subject: ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE  
EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ASSESSMENT**

**Wards: ALL**

**Cabinet Member consulted: CLLR  
CHRISTINE HAMILTON**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates Cabinet on arrangements for the external assessment of equalities performance across the Council and partners against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet notes the proposed arrangements for the peer challenge to assess the Council's performance against the 'Excellent' level of the new Equality Framework for Local Government in November 2011, as laid out in sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this report.
- 2.2 Cabinet notes that Self Evaluation and Case Studies documents have been produced, and will be made available in the Members' Library and Group offices.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Up to 2009, the Equality Standard for Local Government had been the main measure of performance around equalities work. The Standard used to be one of the Best Value Performance Indicators against which all councils were judged. It measured performance on race, disability, gender, age, faith and sexual orientation equality. The Council formally adopted the Standard in March 2003, achieved level one (out of the five levels) in Autumn 2004, and reached level three in March 2008 (for which we were externally assessed). In March 2009 we assessed ourselves at reaching level four of the Standard – no external judgment was required for that level.

- 3.2 In April 2009, the IDeA Equality Framework for Local Government replaced the original Standard. The EFLG concentrates more on outcomes for residents and is less focused on processes.
- 3.3 A migration policy allowed authorities to move over from their level of achievement against the old Standard to new levels in the new Framework. By reaching level four of the ESLG, we are regarded as 'moving towards excellent' under the EFLG. Under the Framework, we need to be reassessed every three years. In 2009, the Council agreed a target of achieving the excellent level of the Framework by March 2011.
- 3.4 The Council's Corporate Equalities Group (CEG), led by James Rolfe, asked Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) to carry out an informal independent assessment to check that our perception of performance was sound. As well as looking at a self-assessment document and supporting documentation, an assessor visited Enfield on 12th January 2011 to interview a range of elected members, CMB, officers, staff and partners. The assessor's report stated that it was judged that Enfield was operating at an excellent level, and suggested that we do more work to demonstrate our good practice in the self evaluation and case studies document. This has now been done, and, as a result, we have provisionally applied for the formal assessment to take place between Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
- 3.5 The assessment team will consist of five members – a lead assessor from LGID who is our main contact, an elected member peer, two officer peers from local authorities, and an officer peer from another sector. The assessors will carry out a range of interviews over the first two and a half days, and will report their initial findings on the final afternoon. At the time of writing this report, only four authorities in the country have been assessed as excellent – Tower Hamlets, Rotherham, Brighton and Hove, and Nottingham City Councils.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

No other options were considered as this considered to be the best measure of equalities performance available.

#### **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Successful accreditation will enhance Enfield's image and reputation from the perspective of our customers, staff, partners and other local authorities.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

The cost of the assessment is estimated at £7,200, and will be met from existing budgets.

### **6.2 Legal Implications**

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010, and includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force in April 2011.

The general PSED is to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. Specific duties of the PSED include publishing data, assessing impact, setting equality objectives and reporting progress at least annually.

Duties under the Act can be enforced by a Judicial Review of a decision, a civil claim against the Council or a claim in the Employment Tribunal, depending upon the breach. The Equality Framework is evidence that the Council is meeting its statutory and legal obligations in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

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### **6.3 Property Implications**

None.

## **7. KEY RISKS**

Achieving the excellent level of the Equality Framework should prevent the risk of non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

## **8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Fairness for All**

Achievement of the excellent level of the Equality Framework will demonstrate that the Council is meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in terms of effectively tackling discrimination, and advancing equality of opportunity and access.

## **8.2 Growth and Sustainability**

None.

## **8.3 Strong Communities**

Achievement of the excellent level of the Equality Framework will demonstrate that the Council is meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to fostering good relations in the local community.

## **9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Compliance with the requirements of the Equality Framework provides evidence that the Council is meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (as far as they are known at the moment), and help ensure that consideration of equalities issues is embedded across the Council.

### **Background Papers**

- Fairness for All – Enfield Council’s Self Evaluation Document
- Enfield Council - Equality and Diversity Case Studies