

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 8 November 2018

Subject: Equality Update

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

This report provides an update on the Council's accreditation against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The Council achieved the highest level of the three-year award in 2015 and sought to retain this in 2018. The report outlines the approach taken to its EFLG review and summarises some of the main points arising from it, with an indication of how these matters are being progressed. It also provides an update on the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) activity linked to the 2018-19 budget and business planning process.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The EFLG review is a holistic framework for equalities performance measurement across a broad range of indicators. Equality delivery across the range of Our Manchester strategy outcomes was considered within the review and informed the awarding decision.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class	

infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	
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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Refreshed Budget and Business Plans - Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), *Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, 1 February 2018*
- Equality Objectives 2016-2020, *Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, 1 March 2018*
- Our Story: Manchester City Council Equality Framework for Local Government Report 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is an equalities performance measurement framework, devised and operated by the Local Government Association (LGA). The EFLG assesses local authorities' equality outcomes across five performance areas:

- Knowing Your Communities
- Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment
- Involving Your Communities
- Responsive Services and Customer Care
- A Skilled and Committed Workforce

1.2 In addition, it has three levels of achievement, namely:

- Developing - understanding the importance of equality
- Achieving - delivering better outcomes
- Excellent - making a difference

The indicators at the excellent level of each performance area are outlined in *Appendix 1* of this report.

1.3 EFLG Excellence is the Local Authority 'gold standard' in equality and diversity. Manchester City Council was originally accredited at the excellent level of the EFLG from 2015 - 2018, following a comprehensive peer review. Continued performance at this level is a Political Priority in support of the organisation's equality objectives and the 'Progressive and Equitable' strand of the Our Manchester Strategy. In support of this, a re-accreditation assessment was arranged for earlier this year with oversight provided by the Council's Equalities Team.

2. 2018 EFLG Peer Review

2.1 The re-accreditation process involved both the submission of a narrative report and supporting evidence and a visit by a peer review team comprising an LGA coordinator and peers from other EFLG Excellent authorities. This visit took place in June and involved a range of deep-dive interviews with Officers, Members and partners.

2.2 Following the peer-review, the Council has been successful in achieving its Excellent level re-accreditation, and is one of a very select number of authorities to have not only achieved the Excellent accreditation but to have retained the award in consecutive terms.

2.3 The peer review found that the Council was comfortably above the threshold for EFLG Excellence. As noted in the peer team's final report:

"The peer team were unanimous in concluding that Manchester City Council could be re-accredited at the "Excellent" level of the framework. The peer team was very pleased to see that the Council has addressed the recommendations

of the peer challenge team in 2015 and that it has maintained and even increased its strong focus on equalities within the community since it first gained the Excellent level award in 2015.”

- 2.4 Overall, the review confirmed the Council’s own understanding of its equalities performance and provides independent assurance of our areas of strength and an impetus to focus our attentions on those areas for further development.
- 2.5 The review team produced a comprehensive and very complimentary report of its findings which Members are invited to review and consider (*Appendix 2* of this report). The report includes a number of areas for consideration identified through the peers’ interrogation of our submission, analysis of further information whilst on-site and the schedule of interviews. The areas for consideration have been extracted from the body of the report and have been used to form the basis of a formal action plan to take forwards this work (developing action plan at *Appendix 3*). Overall, the main points arising from the review can be summarised as:
- The Council has clearly demonstrated that it has progressed the recommendation from its 2015 review and has increased its strong focus on equality
 - The importance of the Our Manchester strategy as a driver for inclusion and equitability was recognised by many contributors to the review, both internally and externally, and by the peer team
 - The Our Manchester approach can be enhanced with more stretching in/equality indicators which will support the equitable delivery of the Our Manchester ambition
 - The Council’s work on social value and inclusive growth is welcomed, but must be extended to make the city’s increasing prosperity an equitable and achievable outcome for all
 - The Council knows, works with and involves its communities well, despite there being a lack of confidence in some areas to talk about equality issues explicitly; some learning and capacity building will help to build confidence and competence
 - The Council’s approach to partnership is very strong with the health and social care integration cited as an excellent example; this can be built on with better sharing and use of data
 - Leadership and governance at Member and officer level are strong and this is recognised by all stakeholders; leaders are encouraged to continue to push the envelope on equalities
 - There are good examples of equality in the workplace for Council employees, with many initiatives impressing, but the workforce profile remains unbalanced regarding BAME and disabled employees in particular, requiring some targeted work
 - Organisational learning and capacity around equality issues is progressing but can be accelerated to provide more balanced outcomes for the workforce.

- 2.6 The Corporate Equality Champions Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, will provide assurance around the delivery of the developing EFLG action plan, working closely with Lead Equality Members.
- 2.7 It is worth noting that both at a City and GM level discussions are ongoing about how to better align local authority and NHS equality measurement frameworks and work collaboratively on joint areas of challenge. The prominent area of shared challenge at present is to continue to improve workforce equality, in particular to increase representation within organisations' leadership levels. There is clear potential for work across partners to progress this, and in doing so, support the Council's response to its EFLG review. However, in doing so it will be important that focus continues to be placed across the EFLG performance areas and that the distinctive local authority elements of this approach are not diluted.

3. Equality Impact Assessments

- 3.1 At its meeting of 1 February 2018 the Committee considered a report outlining the budget and business planning process. This highlighted the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) that Directorates had identified for completion during the financial year.
- 3.2 An update on the current status of the EIAs identified for 2018-19 is at Appendix 4. The next cycle of the budget and business planning process begins imminently. This will give an understanding of likely overall equality impacts by December 2018, with a full list of provisional EIAs required to support Directorates' 2019-20 activity being identified early in 2019.
- 3.3 The developing EFLG action plan includes activity to refresh the Council's EIA framework, including measures to strengthen the governance and quality assurance processes.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council's re-accreditation at the Excellent level of the EFLG is cause for justifiable optimism and should be celebrated. As noted in the narrative submission to the peer team though, we are realistic that the accreditation is not an end in itself, and simply denotes that we are heading in the right direction with our equality, diversity and inclusion approaches.
- 4.2 The outcomes of the review provide us with refreshed impetus to continue to drive the equality agenda in Manchester. The Our Manchester strategy clearly provides a strong framework to operate within and the alignment between the Our Manchester approach and our equality objectives is keenly noted by the peer review team.
- 4.3 Officers will progress the identified areas of activity throughout the accredited period, with monitoring and measurement of progress being regularly reviewed to ensure that the Council's equalities excellence is sustained.