

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2020

Subject: Equality Objectives 2020 - 2024

Report of: City Solicitor

Summary

This report sets out the Council's proposed equality objectives for the period 2020 - 2024. It outlines the approach that the Council has taken to setting these in the past and describes the process that has been undertaken to ensure that the most recent set of objectives represent the priorities of Manchester residents and other stakeholders, as well as those of the Council. The report sets out the objectives in draft form and provides an opportunity for the committee to comment on these to influence further refinement of them before they are published by no later than 6 April 2020.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note and provide comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Whilst the process of setting equality objectives does not directly demonstrate an impact on achievement of the Council's zero-carbon target, the refresh of the draft objectives does take the opportunity to commit to more fully understanding the interaction of equality issues and environmental issues. The Council will complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) against relevant aspects of its environmental programme which will support this undertaking.
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Our 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 process of setting equality objectives itself does not directly impact on this outcome. However, the draft objectives do outline a commitment to inclusive economic opportunities (see objective 2).

A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The process of setting equality objectives itself does not directly impact on this outcome. However, the draft objectives do outline a commitment to building communities skills and capabilities to connect them to economic opportunities (see objective 2).
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Although the process of setting equality objectives itself does not directly impact on this outcome, all of the draft objectives outline how the City's communities contribute to a fair and equitable Manchester.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Although the process of setting equality objectives itself does not directly impact on this outcome, the draft objectives do outline a commitment to more fully understand the links between the City's low carbon ambition and its approaches to inclusion (see objective 2).
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The process of setting equality objectives itself does not directly impact on this outcome. However, the draft objectives do make reference to the City's connectivity and the importance in particular of Manchester's language diversity in relation to this (see objective 3).

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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.

1. Refreshed Equality Objectives 2016-2020, *Communities Scrutiny Committee* – 24 February 2016

1 Introduction: Evolving the Council's Equality Objectives

- 1.1 Local authorities and other public sector bodies have a statutory duty to set one or more equality objective(s) to comply with the specific duties of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.2 The Council published its first statutory equality objective in 2012, to achieve the 'Excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) by 2015. This objective was aligned to three equality priorities for the Council:
 - 1) To strengthen our knowledge, understanding and evidence base about communities so that we can increase community cohesion and design services that meet everyone's needs;
 - 2) To tackle discrimination and narrow the gap between disadvantaged groups and the wider community and between Manchester and the rest of the country;
 - 3) To celebrate the diversity of Manchester and increase awareness of the positive contribution that our diverse communities make to the city.
- 1.3 The Council successfully achieved the Excellent level accreditation of the EFLG in 2015 and has since gone on to be one of only a small number of local authorities to have retained the three-year accreditation in two consecutive periods. The Council's current accreditation extends into 2021.
- 1.4 The Council's second set of equality objectives, published in 2016, built on the three equality priorities used to inform the Council's approach since 2012. The priorities were elaborated on and each was underpinned by a set of more specific performance indicators. The 2016 – 2020 equality objectives are at Appendix 1 of this report for the Committee's information.
- 1.5 The approach to setting objectives against three high level priorities, with more specific areas of focus set against each, was welcomed by the Local Government Association during its EFLG peer review of the Council in 2018. For that reason, the refresh for the 2020 – 2024 objectives sought to take views 1) on whether stakeholders thought that this approach should be continued with and 2) if so, what evidence, experiences and information should be considered when revising the indicators for each objective.
- 1.6 This report describes more fully the engagement and analysis that has underpinned the refresh of the Council's equality objectives for 2020 – 2024, and presents a draft set of objectives and indicators for the Committee's consideration and comment.

2 Engaging on the Equality Objectives 2020 - 2024

- 2.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team (EDI Team) decided at an early stage that the refresh of the Council's equality objectives in 2020 would take a strengthened approach to engaging with stakeholders. Building on previous experiences of online consultations and engagement workshops with voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector partners, the EDI

Team sought to more directly engage face to face with Manchester residents, as well as a broader pool of other stakeholders including public sector partners, businesses, Council employees, trade unions and Elected Members.

- 2.2 Over a two month period from 1 October to 2 December 2019, the EDI Team led a mixed method engagement campaign which drew over 300 responses. The 'outward facing' types of engagement included drop-in and bookable sessions for the public and / or more targeted stakeholders as follows:
- 17 engagement sessions for residents at libraries and leisure centres across a range of Manchester wards: Ancoats and Beswick, Burnage, Charlestown, Chorlton, Crumpsall, Deansgate, Didsbury West, Fallowfield, Gorton, Harpurhey, Hulme, Levenshulme, Longsight, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, Moss Side, Withington, Woodhouse Park;
 - Six focus group sessions specifically for representatives from the VCSE. These sessions were managed to ensure a cross-section of representation from all the key identity groups;
 - Seven engagement sessions for public sector partners and internal stakeholders. These sessions considered the priorities of services within Manchester City Council and across the public sector looking at how can systems and processes can improve in order to achieve better outcomes.
- 2.3 The resident engagement sessions were promoted across multiple social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Throughout the duration of the engagement period, an on-line survey was being run and promoted, in order to receive feedback from those people that were unable to attend the drop-in or bookable sessions.
- 2.4 The same questions were asked across all platforms to ensure consistency and validity of the data collected. The questions adopted an 'appreciative enquiry' approach, which reflects the strength-based approach that underpins the Our Manchester strategy and behaviours. Starting with the existing 2016 – 2020 objectives, stakeholders were asked if they thought the high level objectives should be kept or changed. People were then asked what mattered to them and what could make Manchester even better. The strengths-based lines of enquiry included questions such as:
- What could we do to help different groups of people get on even better?
 - What do you think we can do to make life more equal for all of Our Manchester residents?
 - What is the best thing about Our Manchester being so diverse?
- 2.5 The responses received from the engagement overwhelmingly indicated that stakeholders agreed that the three high level objectives should remain in place, but that there was a clear case for refreshing the indicators that sat beneath each one. Suggestions for the refreshed indicators were, on the whole, helpful and could be aligned with some clear themes. Some of the feedback received reflected what stakeholders felt was working less well; this has been considered in the development of the draft indications below and articulated as a set of commitments.

- 2.6 The engagement outcomes were therefore grouped by themes. Each of these themes has been considered and compared alongside the Council's service plans and Our Business Plan, in order to develop a set of proposed refreshed indicators which reflect the engagement outcomes, which speak to a broad range of ongoing commitments and / or planned activities and which articulate Council priorities.

3 Draft Equality Objectives 2020 – 2024

- 3.1 Based on the outcomes of the process above, a draft set of equality objectives with refreshed indicators has been developed, as follows:

Objective 1 – Knowing Manchester Better

We will work together with Manchester's citizens and our partners in the public and voluntary sectors to improve the quality of the information we have about Manchester's diverse communities. This will strengthen our understanding of our people and will help us to support 'community cohesion', where people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area, and treat each other with respect and consideration. We will engage with our citizens to build strong, trusting relationships which will help us to develop policies and commission services that meet everyone's needs.

We have 6 indicators that will tell us we're making progress in these areas:

1. We will strengthen our approaches to engaging with residents and communities, making extra effort to speak to people and groups who are harder to reach. We will embrace co-production, reaching out to people at the earliest opportunity when developing our services and projects, and enabling minority and / or disadvantaged groups to influence the decisions that affect them the most. We will build on what people tell us to better understand our communities and how our services affect them.
2. We will use our growing knowledge of Manchester people and their lives to inform our own priorities and services. We will share this evidence-base with our partners and learn from their understanding of communities, to ensure that our shared work reflects residents' challenges, issues and opportunities. This will help us to develop targeted and effective services across the public sector built on robust evidence, without the risk of duplication.
3. We will continue to work with and support Manchester's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, recognising the close and unique relationship that they have with many protected characteristic groups in the City. Working with our VCSE partners, we have started to develop the leadership and capacity of some of our BAME and disability groups amongst others, which we will continue to build on together.

4. Building on the tolerance and unity that characterises Our Manchester, we will work with our partners and directly with communities of identity to ensure that our communities are cohesive and safe places to live. We will learn from our communities what unites us, and tackle those things that people feel would divide us. We will monitor our community relations, mindful of tensions in the UK more broadly, and will address hateful, divisive and anti-social behaviour head on, to support our Manchester people to enjoy a City that is respectfully everyone's.
5. We will support our City Council workforce to build its knowledge and confidence about Manchester's communities, developing up to date tools and learning about a wide range of identity groups. We will capitalise on the diversity of our workforce, engaging with our staff networks to learn from their experiences of working with the Council and helping them to influence our approaches to inclusive employment.
6. We will extend our use of Equality Impact Assessments, making sure that all of our key priorities and services are underpinned by a robust understanding of how they affect different people differently.

Objective 2 – Improving Life Chances

We want everyone living in Manchester to have a good quality of life and equal chances. We aim to remove disadvantage and prejudice from people's lives and make sure that everyone has access to the services and opportunities that will help them to fulfil their potential. We know that for some groups in Manchester this is not already the case and we will work with our partners to take a positive approach to removing inequalities.

We have 6 aims to support this:

1. We will work towards providing the best economic opportunities and outcomes for families, whilst continuing to work with our public and VCSE partners to connect residents to those opportunities. We will equip residents with the skills and qualifications to enable them to access the City's opportunities, developing approaches that are flexible, accessible and inclusive of residents' language, learning and other needs. We will build the digital capacity of our communities as the City's digital infrastructure grows.
2. In addition to the ongoing development of Manchester's housing and commercial stock, we will continue to develop accessible, inclusive travel networks to connect people to opportunities. We will work to more fully understand the interaction between equality issues and environmental issues, ensuring that our work to advance our priorities in each does not impact negatively on the other.
3. We will continue our work with partners to reform, strategically plan, jointly commission and deliver a range of provision to support children, young

people and their families at the earliest opportunity. We will reduce adverse child experiences and invest in children and young people's growth and development by ensuring we have a deeper understanding of the root causes. Our children and young people will be supported to have the best start in life and equal access to high quality education, continuing to narrow educational gaps between the UK average and Manchester and between different identity groups in the City's schools.

4. Building on the City's successes in integrating health and social care services, we will continue to reduce health inequalities and provide health and social care services on a locality basis to suit everybody's needs. We will use our growing knowledge of the differing health trends across Manchester's communities of identity and tailor services to meet those needs.
5. We will take a strengths-based approach to reducing homelessness in Manchester, working across services and partner agencies to ensure people are not discharged from services to the street, and that access to housing is complimented by access to skills, education, employment and health. We will work to prevent personal circumstances from being a barrier to opportunities, and provide support for those in the greatest need.
6. We will embed programmes of work to enable the Council's workforce to be more reflective of the communities it services. In particular, we will increase the proportion of BAME and disabled people in the Council's workforce overall, and introduce measures to make sure these groups are more represented in the organisation's senior leadership.

Objective 3 – Celebrating Our Diversity

Manchester's commitment to equality and diversity is part of its fabric; the City has championed equality for generations and has been home to a number of inclusion figureheads. We have a thriving and increasingly diverse population with a wealth of characters, cultures and contributions. The City has much to celebrate, be that its past, present or future. We've achieved a lot by working with our different communities to promote their identities and achievements. We will maintain and build on that, going even further to celebrate Manchester's diversity.

We have 5 indicators to tell us we're making progress:

1. We will continue to support and deliver events that promote the achievements and contributions of our diverse communities. Manchester boasts an events calendar full of celebrations of its people, both historical and contemporary. We will enhance this by promoting the achievements of our own workforce, working with our employee networks to showpiece their achievements and abilities.

2. Working to national frameworks and accreditations, we will achieve and maintain the highest standards in meeting the needs of key stakeholder groups such as achieving the Disability Confident Leader and Armed Forces Covenant Gold standards. We will publicise and celebrate these achievements, highlighting our own good practice and influencing that of our partners.
3. We will continue to raise the profile of equality issues and the diversity of our residents and workforce in our internal and external communications. We will ensure that inclusion is everybody's business, and that people recognise their identities being reflected in the way the Council promotes itself.
4. Recognising the strength and capabilities of Manchester's people, we will further extend the Our Manchester principles of enabling communities to find solutions that are right for and work for them. We will capitalise on the City's existing assets, both in terms of facilities and people, and investigate new ways of connecting these together to form unique and innovative solutions.
5. We will make sure our work connects to the broadest range of people by embracing Manchester's language diversity. We will promote Manchester's multilingualism as a cause for celebration, recognising the opportunity to share examples and experience of over 200 languages across communities and cultures to bring people together, as well as connecting Manchester and its people to international opportunities.

3.2 The Committee will note that the updated indicators represent an evolution of the 2016 – 20 indicators, rather than a complete revision of them. This reflects both the thematic nature of the engagement feedback received and moreover, the evolution of the Council's priorities during the same timescale. The indicators, especially those that underpin the Improving Life Chances objective, have been specifically tailored to align to the eight high level priority areas outlined in the Our Business Plan. In particular, the Committee will recognise a strong alignment with the areas of:

- Young People
- Healthy, cared-for people
- Housing
- Neighbourhoods
- Connections
- Growth that benefits everyone
- Well-managed Council

3.3 Equality-related priorities linked to the Council's zero carbon ambitions came through less clearly in the engagement feedback. The Council is aware though, that there are some significant links between equality issues and environmental ones (such as preventing disadvantage for some residents as a result of having to adapt to a changing environment, both financially and

socially), which it has committed in the draft objectives to more fully understand and respond to.

3.4 The Committee is invited to comment on the draft objectives and indicators. Feedback received from the committee will be considered in the refinement of the indicators in March, during which time the EDI Team will also be engaging with the Council services more directly responsible for delivery against each of the thematic areas. This will allow the opportunity to ensure that:

- The final set of indicators accurately reflects deliverable activity;
- The indicators are aligned with services' performance metrics, where these are available;
- There is broader organisational recognition and ownership of the objectives and indicators;
- A timescale and process for monitoring and measuring progress against the objectives can be established.

4 Monitoring and Reporting Progress

4.1 As has been the case since 2016, the EDI Team will annually gather evidence of progress against the equality objectives from the services most directly responsible for delivery, based on their respective performance measurement arrangements. It has been noted in previous monitoring against the equality objectives that data cannot always be disaggregated to reflect differential experiences of a service or function of different identity groups. Due consideration will be had for this when engaging with services, in order to assess the feasibility of improving the quality of data going forwards.

4.2 Although the statutory requirement to update the equality objectives is a four-yearly one, the annual review of progress will allow the opportunity to reflect on each of the underpinning indicators and take a view on:

- Whether they should remain for a further 12 months
- Whether they should be adjusted to reflect a changes in circumstances
- Whether they should be removed due to a changes in circumstances

4.3 The EDI Team is committed to continuing to report the Council's progress against its equality objectives on an annual basis.

5 Publicising the Equality Objectives

5.1 Following the process of refining the draft objectives and indicators, they will be published on the Council's website along with sufficient information to evidence the engagement that underpinned their development, thereby fulfilling the statutory requirement.

5.2 In addition to this, the refreshed objectives will be promoted internally and externally via:

- A social media campaign to promote the refreshed objectives with residents and partners;
- An internal communication and intranet campaign to promote the objectives with the Council's workforce.

5.3 This approach builds on the continued use of the three high level objectives and seeks to establish a 'brand', whereby there is increased recognition and sense of ownership of the objectives within the Council's workforce in the first instance, and with partners more broadly.

6 Conclusion

6.1 More than fulfilling a statutory requirement, the Council welcomes the refresh of its equality objectives as an opportunity to reflect on and articulate some of its key equality commitments over the next four years. The enhanced process of engagement that has underpinned this refresh has been wholly rewarding, both for the stakeholders who were engaged in the process, and for the officers who undertook the work.

6.2 It is noted by the officers involved that the passion with which participants spoke about their views on equality was very encouraging and reflected Manchester's reputation for being an inclusive and ambitious city in this regard. It is also noted that many stakeholders spoke about Manchester's great strength and achievements in this area, and recognised the Council's role in this.

6.3 The process of refining the draft objectives and indicators will continue throughout March, with the final set of objectives published on the Council's website by 6 April 2020 and a promotion campaign following directly on. Services will continue to measure progress against these throughout 2020 – 2021 with achievements and ongoing activity to be reported at the end of that period.