

Equalities Impact Assessments – workshop for the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee (Appendix C)

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The two attached PowerPoint presentations were shared as part of the workshop.

The following points were raised during the presentations and discussion:

- Lewisham Council uses the term Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) and the Council's [Corporate Equalities Policy](#) sets out the requirements for EAAs.
- EAAs are required for major policy service change or major strategies. The EAAs should demonstrate the likely impact. This is different from Equalities Implications in reports which should include relevant considerations that could potentially impact a decision. *N.b. the Committee requested seeing the guidance on when EAAs should be produced and a procedure was drafted by legal in response to this request (attached).*
- EAAs should always be referenced in committee reports and be appended to reports so all can see and cross-reference. If it's not there then that is not consistent with policy. Internally there is a reasonable expectation that officers undertaking the work would ensure they know the policy and undertake an EAA. Department Management Team and Service Management should also be aware and signing off therefore should know to check for EAAs. Corporately there was a committee agenda planning process where this could be checked.
- Members questioned whether there could be a checking process built in (i.e. in Glasgow members have training and can send back reports that do not include EIAs when they are needed).
- The Council's Corporate Equalities Policy includes guidance for producing EAAs including data collection guidance. The policy was last reviewed in 2017 and was now under review and the recommendations from the Safer Stronger Equalities Review could feed into the process. There would be workshops on this throughout the organisation and targeted work with individual services.

Sanctuary Strategy:

- Currently, the standard data collection the Council used was usually based on the protected characteristic as defined under the Equality Act provision. Areas could be added such as refugee status, nationality, and socio-economic status. Some organisations already have data that could be shared. As part of the Sanctuary strategy, the possibility of including additional data as areas are identified and where appropriate was being taken forward.
- There had been a Listening exercise with Lewisham Migration Forum as part of the sanctuary borough work. This had produced anecdotal evidence but not empirical data.
- The analysis undertaken for the Sanctuary Strategy EAA showed there was a lack of data.

- Sometimes a fear of showing incomplete data to committee could be an issue. Providing confidence interval levels on available data would be useful to help members understand the confidence of the impact listed.
- It was important to have as much data as possible but lack of data should not be a barrier to submission of an EAA. Decision-makers need to see where there are gaps.
- It remained an on-going challenge to get personal information from service users even for statutory services as monitoring information is optional.
- Cllr Campbell stated that the Council needed to think more about what could be done to ensure people want to and feel safe sharing their information with the Council.
- Better data sharing across the organisation and with partner organisations such as Lewisham Homes was really important. Officers need the confidence to know what they can share and to proactively support colleagues. Processes to share data openly between officers should be built in.
- The Democracy Review includes a recommendation on open data.
- The Council needs assurance that the data is safe and secure before sharing data. Also the agreement individuals made when giving the data needs to be suitable for any data sharing to take place.
- Corporate Training on GDPR was important and an understanding of when and how to anonymise data.
- The language of the Equalities Act was quite specific and not always up to date. Thinking more about how people identify themselves and adapting language might be helpful to better engage people.
- Building bespoke IT solutions to effective data-sharing could be important.
- The Lewisham observatory webpages provided demographic statistics <https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/>

Achilles Street:

- The Achilles Street consultation had been an example of good practice in consultation and engagement carried out by the Council and the EAA reflected this.
- 89 homes were balloted. The Housing Service had good data on protected characteristics etc. of estate members to know who was affected. The housing database from Lewisham Homes also gave access to data on tenants.
- A comprehensive consultation was undertaken. The team met with individual households, held drop in sessions, and had lots of contact with residents. This helped them to pick up additional information such as on disabilities. The team found that the one to one meetings were giving lots of additional data. The team spoke to every council tenant and resident on the estate.
- Information such as bedroom size and medical issues meant that provision could be really tailored to the needs of residents. The consultation also led to Tenants and Residents Associations being re-established on the estate.
- Often seldom heard voices were being heard for the first time such as individuals who had previously been isolated. The Council worked with Studio Raw to do resident engagement exercises and provided food and refreshments. This encouraged a wider range of people to engage and have their voices heard as historically it could often be the people who complained most who were heard even if they were not always the most affected.

- Issues were picked up such as language challenges for some residents and as a result offers were translated into different languages. Other issues included housing management issues such as arrears difficulties.
- It was essential to understand the community to know how best to ballot to get a response. This led to the polling station method which was very successful in combination with more traditional methods such as online.
- It was time and resource intensive to carry out this level of consultations.