

APPENDIX 1

Key Equalities Issues for each Directorate

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee requested that each Executive Director produce a summary for the Committee highlighting the key equalities issues facing the Directorate. This Appendix contains the response from each Directorate and was used by the Committee to help scope their review.

Community Services Directorate

1. This briefing summarises some of the main equality issues facing the Community Services Directorates. The briefing covers both policy issues as well as practical process management issues.
2. The Community Services Directorate supports the following services:
 - Adults social care
 - Public protection and safety
 - Public health
 - Culture and community development
 - Adults commissioning

Overview

3. A summary of key equalities issues that are impacting upon the Directorate are set out under the sub-headers below.

budget cuts

4. The impact of austerity has undoubtedly had the hardest impact on the most vulnerable households and most disadvantaged groups. Since 2011, the Council has reduced its revenue budget by some £160m. Limited resources mean that there is less to go around, with the inevitable consequence that those who are least equipped to help themselves face the most negative impact.

service users

5. Whilst the Directorate provides a range of services for the whole borough, it also provides services to specific groups such as vulnerable adults. In total there are some 3,500 adults aged 18 plus in receipt of social care services. In terms of adults social care one of the key equality issues and challenges is to promote independence for adults to and to ensure that where possible, they are able to live in their own homes. This specifically considers equality in its broadest sense i.e. the right to live independently regardless of health status rather than through the narrow confines of the equality act. This highlights an issue that runs throughout the Directorates consideration of the equality agenda namely that we tend to be driven by the stipulations of the Equality Act, and the defined protected characteristics, to the detriment of other considerations which may be equally pertinent in Lewisham e.g. socio-economic status.

Brexit

6. The implications of Brexit are still to be fully understood. However, it is accepted that the economic impact is likely to be negative. The Council is seeking to better understanding the numbers of impacted EU citizens in Lewisham, including those to whom the Council has a direct duty of care. This will ensure that we are able to target support more appropriately to those in the greatest need.

data capture

7. It is important to note that the provision of personal information is always discretionary and the Council has no right to mandate that anyone completing a survey or requiring access to a service should provide personal information. However, it is recognised that the Council could do better at making the case for collecting this data as it is a valuable source of evidence for strategy development, equality analysis assessment, service planning and for understanding the impact of budget decisions. An example of specific things that could be done to improve disclosure rates in surveys, undertaken by the Directorate include the following:
 - making specifically clear how personal (equalities) information will be used to improve services, develop services and improve customer experience
 - demonstrating how such information has been used effectively in the past to improve services, develop services and improve customer experience

robustness of equality analysis assessments

8. It is acknowledged that the quality and robustness of equality analysis assessments needs to be better. This is an organisation-wide challenge, not just one for Community Services. Part of challenge is that the variation of data needed to inform robust equality analysis assessment that provide, not just breadth across protected characteristics, but also depth in terms of understanding the complexity of those characteristics is not always available. The reason for this, is perhaps due to the fact that the rationale for collecting the data is not always clearly articulated and agreed from the outset.
9. The Directorate undertakes robust equalities analysis at the time of major changes or set piece activities e.g. the re-commissioning of a service/the re-letting of the grants programme but the day to day use of equalities data to develop and change service is less well developed. This is also the case for on-going analysis following a specific cut or re-organisation as the assessments tend to be 'snap-shots in time' rather than longitudinal studies. In addition the assessments are often focused on the specific, direct impact that a cut or change may have, rather than considering wider impacts across the council and/or community. This is in part a resources issue as the service development/monitoring function has suffered alongside all others in relation to budget cuts.

gaps in data breadth and depth

10. It is acknowledged that for some protected characteristics, data capture is better than others. For example, race, disability, gender and age are characteristics where there is better access to data. By contrast gender reassignment and sexual orientation are examples of protected characteristics where the volume and variability of data for analysis and decision-making is either limited or virtually non-existent.
11. It would be useful to know about instances where service users have accessed the Council through multiple points of entry (children's social care, adults' social care, housing, benefits etc). On a very practical level the routine sharing of that sort of information means that the Council can gain a more complete picture of a service user, where their needs reflect multiple- characteristics and support the process of service development. However, it is also invaluable to the extent that it prevents the need to double-count. To this end, the Council could explore this kind of equality data mapping and sharing as an area for development.
12. It should also be noted that attempts to improve the level of data capture can lead to un-intended and negative consequences e.g. recent attempts to improve the level of data on leisure centre visitors led to long queues at reception as data capture was undertaken.

Interface with wider community and services

13. The Directorate can sometimes struggle to fully understand where its role begins and ends in terms of addressing wider issues of inequality/disproportionality particular in times where budgets are very tight and the need to maintain a core service offer is the primary consideration.
14. This will include issues relating to wide ranging health inequalities or disproportionality within the criminal justice system where drivers and system interfaces are wide ranging and complex.
15. This is not to say these issues are not directly considered by services e.g. the Safer Lewisham Partnership board have focused on disproportionality in the CJS for 5 years and have a robust plan in place and review this issue regularly across the partnership focusing on "How do we understand and ensure negative bias is reflected upon and protected against" and have led work delivering unconscious bias training for all senior leaders across the partnership. There is also excellent data available in areas like Stop and Search and YOS where we are proactively looking at the data in respect of disproportionality and using it to question, challenge practice and take action but the question remains how far these positive interventions can address wider issues within society.

Customer Services Directorate

Introduction

16. This briefing summarises some of the main equality issues facing the Customer Services Directorate. The briefing covers policy and practical process management issues.

17. The Customer Services Directorate is comprised of the following service divisions:

- Housing
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Environment

Overview

18. A summary of key equalities issues that are impacting upon the Directorate are set out under the sub-headers below.

Borough demography

19. Lewisham is changing. This change is evident not just in terms of population growth, but also in terms of the diversity. By the time of the next Census in 2021, the population of the borough is forecast to reach 318,000. The impact of people living longer means that over time the population of over 65's is expected to increase. Lewisham is also likely to see a rise in the number of single person households (continuing the trend over previous Censuses). A further significant change will be the increase in the BAME population, which is expected to account for at least half of all Lewisham residents by 2021. The impact of the above present policy and service challenges for the Council, in terms of housing, area regeneration and demand for local services.

Budget cuts

20. Austerity has had a significant impact on the Directorate and the specific individuals and groups that it serves. Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, the Customer Services Directorate revenue budget has been reduced by £27.3m. The challenge for the Directorate is that the scope and scale of cuts is inevitably impacting on the most vulnerable groups and communities. Whilst the Directorate will always look to mitigate negative impacts, where-ever we can, this has become increasingly difficult.

Service users

21. The Directorate provides services to some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough such as older people, the disabled and homeless families. Currently there are just over 2,189 households living in temporary accommodation, of which about 2,000 are households with children.
22. By working alongside housing developers and through its wider planning and regeneration role, the Directorate seeks to increase the number of affordable homes in the borough. The issue of housing affordability is significant in the broader context of socio-economic equality (the average household income in Lewisham is below that of London). The Directorate has also recognised the need to develop housing solutions that meet the needs of other groups such as those of LGBT and older residents.
23. In addition to the above, the Directorate is supporting the Syrian Refugee Programme. To date, some 17 families have been accommodated in the borough through the programme. Our target is to welcome 100 families in total by 2022.

Brexit

24. In common with other parts of the Council, the Customer Services Directorate is gearing up for the impact of Brexit. Some of the issues that we are monitoring very closely include:
- numbers of EU national presenting as homeless at our Housing Options Centre,
 - numbers of EEA nationals accessing the private rented sector who may have less knowledge about housing rights
 - reluctance of Landlords to rent to EEA nationals due to lack of legal clarity, which could result in approaches to the council and possible obligations on us to provide housing

Data capture

25. The Directorate undertakes a wide-range of public consultations that are consistent with our programme of strategy and service development. As part of this, we routinely ask that consultees complete a diversity questionnaire so that we can better understand the implications of our proposals on them. It is important to note that the provision of personal information is always discretionary and the Council has no right to mandate that anyone completing a survey or requiring access to a service should provide personal information. However, it is recognised that we could do better at making the case for collecting this information. This is an area that the Directorate is working on with corporate colleagues.

Gaps in data breadth and depth

26. It is acknowledged that for some protected characteristics, the availability of data is more plentiful than for others. For example, race, disability, gender, pregnancy & maternity and age are characteristics where there is better access to data. By contrast

gender reassignment and sexual orientation are examples of protected characteristics where the volume and variability of data for analysis and decision-making is limited. Whilst the Directorate is keen to ensure that it captures relevant data, we are also mindful of the need to ensure that the case for data collection is based on a sound business case, rather than collection for collection sake.

assessing residents with multiple characteristics

27. As a Directorate, we are taking active steps to ensure that we have the most complete understanding of 'multiple characteristics' in assessing the needs of residents who approach the Council for help. For example in housing; knowledge of an applicant's age, disability and maternity status help us to better assess their eligibility for services. Going forward, we are keen to develop this approach including through the use of smart software and data matching to predict growth in service demand and, where possible, to improve the timeliness of service interventions.

robustness of equality analysis assessments

28. In the performance of its role, the Customer Services Directorate collects a wide range of data. In some instances, data is collected through routine assessment for service eligibility, whilst in other instances it is obtained in response to consultations, complaints and other interactions with the public. However, it is acknowledged that the quality and robustness of equality analysis assessments could be further improved upon. Part of the challenge is that the variation of data needed to inform robust equality analysis assessment in terms of breadth across protected characteristics as well as depth in terms of understanding the complexity of impact, is not always readily available. The reason for this, is perhaps due to the fact that the rationale for collecting the data is not always made clear.

oversight of directorate management

29. The Directorate Management Team, continues to keep its approach to equalities under review. This is necessary to ensure that our approach is both consistent and sufficiently nuanced to reflect the specific and individual needs of each service area. The ongoing programme of work, which is being overseen by the Executive Director for Customer Services, will continue.

Children and Young People's Directorate

Introduction

30. This briefing summarises some of the main equality issues facing the Children and Young People's Directorate. The briefing covers both policy challenges as well as what we understand to be some of the practical and process management issues.
31. The Children and Young People's Directorate is comprised of the following service divisions:
- Children's Social Care
 - Joint Commissioning and Early Help
 - Education

Overview

32. A summary of equality issues being addressed by the Children and Young People's Directorate are set out under the various sub-headers below.

understanding the changing borough demographics

33. About a quarter of Lewisham's 301,000 population is comprised on children and young people aged 0-19. In terms of ethnicity, whilst 46 per cent of the borough's general population are of BAME heritage, this rises to 68 per cent for children in care and 76 per cent for the borough's schools population. There are also more than 170 languages spoken by children attending Lewisham schools.
34. About a third of the borough's children live in poverty, with 'income deprivation affecting children' particularly pronounced in Evelyn, Bellingham and Downham. Between 2014 and 2019, Lewisham has seen a 60 per cent increase the number of children and young people issued with an Education Health and Care Plan (as a result of their Special Educational Need/ Disability).

impact of budget cuts on services for children and young people

35. Public sector austerity has had a significant impact on the services provided in the Children and Young People's Directorate. Between 2010/11 to 2018/19, the Directorate has seen its budget reduced by 30%. The Directorate, is also impacted by cuts to the various support services upon which the Directorate relies and the austerity impacts on partners such as police and health.
36. Whilst it is recognised that the burden of spending cuts must be borne by the entire organisation, the challenge of delivering savings, whilst at the same time protecting the borough's most vulnerable residents presents an even greater challenge. The fact that

in 2017/18 more than 90 per cent of Councils, nationally, overspent their children's social care budgets underlines the above point.

Service need and demand

37. Set out below is a summary of service need and demand issues for services operating within the directorate:

- **Ensuring the right provision at the right time and of the right quality to young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).** Provision in Lewisham is good but demand is rising (Ref: SEND Strategy 2016-2019). A new strategy to be agreed by December 2019
- **Ensuring access of BME children and young people and economically disadvantaged to mental health services.** Under-representation in services, long waiting lists for some services (Ref: CAMHS Transformation Plan Member led and NHS Improvement Recommendations All Age BAME Mental Health Equality Audit)
- **Improving school attainment of Black Caribbean pupils and White Free School Meals pupils.** Nationally, these are the lowest attaining groups – mirrored in Lewisham. (Ref: Report to CYP Select Committee, March 2019 and BME attainment strategy to CYP Select Committee and M&C September 2019)
- **Understanding ethnic breakdown of children and young people at different points in the children's social care system.** Pattern differs between ethnic groups at the stages of the child safeguarding process. Further analysis is planned.
- **Tackling overrepresentation of Black Caribbean pupils in permanent school exclusions.** As in other London boroughs, there is over-representation of Black Caribbean pupils in those permanently excluded, lining up with overrepresentation in criminal justice system. This is being addressed through the Inclusion Strategy (Ref: Review by CYP Select Committee reported 12th June 2019)
- **Increasing BME representation in senior management in schools.** Data is not good but this issue has been identified as a priority by Lewisham Learning, the school-led school improvement partnership.
- **Increasing the numbers of BME governors.** Data collection undertaken spring 2019 to establish baseline. (Ref: Report to CYP Select in September 2019)
- **Reducing childhood obesity which disproportionately affects BME and disadvantaged groups.** Rates for obesity and excess weight in Reception are the lowest recorded and now lower than England. A reduction in obesity prevalence for the fourth consecutive year was also seen in Year 6, but remains significantly higher than England. Rates higher in BME children and in the most deprived wards (Ref: Whole Systems Obesity action plan 2019-21. Reports to WSO project board)

- **Ensuring disadvantaged 2 year olds access free early years provision** – accessing early years provision improves the life chances of children and improves parents access to work. Lewisham has increased take up by 12% to 64% (Ref: Early Years Strategy).

Brexit

38. The Directorate is represented on the Council's Brexit Working Group. For children and young people, one of the major challenges is to ensure that the Council fulfils its role, as a Corporate Parent, to assist children and young people currently in care and those who have left care (who are EU nationals) to apply for Settled Status if they so wish. It should be noted that the Directorate is already taking active steps to address this issue.

data analysis

39. The Directorate holds a wide range of equalities data across protected characteristics. The data is collected across the range of services provided by the Directorate and provides it with a critical view through which to better understand the impact of its actions upon children and young people living in the borough. However, an area where services in the Directorate could be more effective is with regard to data analysis. The main constraint here is the limited capacity available at service or corporate level that can be devoted to this activity.

robustness of systems and processes

40. The Children and Young People's Directorate is the business systems owner of the Liquid Logic Children's Casework System. The system is the primary tool used by Children's Social Care to manage records for children and young people who come to the attention of the local authority. The variants of information held on the system include demographic data eg: age, ethnicity, gender, race and disability. Currently there is a major programme of transformation that that will deliver the end-to-end reconfiguration of the system and improve data recording on the system. This in turn will also improve both data recording, reliability and social work practice.

externally commissioned services

41. The Directorate commissions a wide range of services from external providers. These services are crucial in terms of meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people in the borough. As part of the Early Help Strategy, the Directorate is strengthening the consistency in our approach to data gathering from service providers.

Resources Directorate

Introduction

42. This briefing summarises some of the main equality issues facing the Resources Directorate. The briefing covers both policy and practical process management issues.

43. The Resources Directorate is comprised of the following service divisions:

- Public Services
- ICT and Digital Services
- Corporate Resources
- Financial Services

Chief Executive direct reports, who attend Resources Directorate Management Team

- Strategy and Communications
- Policy and Governance
- Human Resources
- Legal Services

Overview

44. Although Resources is comprised almost exclusively of back office service areas, there are a significant number of equality issues affecting the Directorate. A summary of these issues are set out under the sub-headers below.

Understanding the changing borough demographics

45. There are significant issues here for support services in terms of helping frontline service areas to ensure that the Council continues to meet the needs of our diverse borough, whether that be in terms of strategic planning, or establishing the corporate approach to promoting equality and fairness in the provision of services and performance of functions. This is mainly addressed through the business planning and performance reporting frameworks the Council operates.

Impact of budget cuts on support services and financial monitoring

46. Public sector austerity continues to impact on the most vulnerable households and disadvantaged groups in the borough. The Council has sought to protect frontline service areas from the worst of the cuts programme. In order to do so the Resources Directorate has, as a proportion of its budget, borne the greatest burden of spending

cuts with more to come. Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, the Resources Directorate has seen its revenue budget reduced by £30.8m.

47. However, the reduction in support service spend is not without consequence for the Council. This is because limited back office capacity (whether in terms of ICT support, workforce development, strategic planning or data analysis) has a negative impact on the ability of services to function effectively.
48. In terms of process, the impact of budget savings proposals is assessed as part of the consideration of equalities in all cuts proposals, presented to Members for pre-scrutiny before Mayor & Cabinet decision. If agreed, services are then responsible for completing and monitoring the equalities impact as cuts are implemented.

Brexit

49. The Division is actively involved in co-ordinating the Council's response to the implications of Brexit on Lewisham. The Director of Policy and Governance chairs the cross-directorate Brexit Working Group and liaises with London as the Council's designated Single Point of Contact. The Director of Public Services chairs the Lewisham Resilience Planning and co-ordinates both emergency and business continuity planning across the Council. The effective performance of this function is crucial if the Council is to be able to ensure continuity of service, particularly for the most vulnerable residents and protect cohesion in borough from those who would want to foment community tensions.

Public facing services supported by the directorate

50. Public Services is the only resident-facing Division in the Directorate. The Division performs a wide range of functions with significant equalities implications including the collection of revenues and the award of benefits to vulnerable residents. The service also provides a first point of contact to the residents of the borough.
51. In addition, the Division manages the Council's information requests and complaints service and parking service. Equalities are considered when making any changes to these services, whether imposed by central government policy change or through service enhancements (e.g. technology).

Digitalisation of public facing services

52. The impact of spending cuts has seen a number of customer facing services move from face-to-face channels to online. Whilst such an approach has been necessary to generate cost savings, there remains the risk that communities who are at risk of digital exclusion such as the elderly, street homeless and others without ready access to ICT could become marginalised. There is a work to do here to follow-through the impact of

decisions to 'channel shift' both in the past and ensure that we carefully consider proposals to do so again in the future.

Corporate assurance

53. The Resources Directorate performs a number of functions across the organisation that are geared towards corporate assurance in the area of equalities. For example, the work of Human Resources ensures rigour and fairness in the recruitment process, monitors the diversity of the Council's work force, collects data on issues such as the gender pay gap and supports employee engagement such as through the LGBT and Disability forums. The wealth of data collected by the Human Resources Division forms the basis of an annual employment report presented to Members each July.
54. As part of the Directorate's corporate health and safety role, we co-ordinate work-place accessibility assessments, to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made to the equipment used by Council staff. This is a key equality role and responsibility not least because it is part of the Council's broader duty of care responsibility for its employees.
55. The corporate audit function helps takes a helicopter view of the discharge of all Council functions and services to ensure that they are compliant with policy standards and holds services to account for addressing areas for improvement.
56. Through the exercise of the corporate performance management function, the Resources Directorate produces a suite of reports for services across the Council. The data contained in these reports supports services in adults and children's social care and is necessary to inform management action and safeguard the well-being of vulnerable service users. The Directorate has also been leading on a wide-ranging programme of data quality management.
57. Legal Services provides advice to services across the organisation, with specialist and helps to ensure that decision are consistent with legislation and regulation, in particular where this relates to Children's, Health & Social Care, Equality and Human Rights legislation. Legal Services also review and comment on equalities as part of the legal implications in all written decision reports, whether to Mayor & Cabinet or delegated to officers. In addition, the Director of Law delivers an equality briefing to senior managers to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities under the law.
58. In terms of business governance on equalities agenda, the Resources Directorate convenes the cross-directorate Corporate Equalities Board. The Board, which is chaired by the Executive Director for Community Services, oversees the programme of work as it relates to service and employee-related equality issues.
59. However, it is recognised that more can and should be done to enhance the way in which services operating within the Resources Directorate discharge their roles and functions. In particular, the extent to which all services discharge those functions through the prism of equalities, rather than with equalities as a broader contextual consideration.

Data capture

60. With the unrelenting pace of public sector austerity, the need for reliable equality data to inform decision-making has never been more important. The Council needs to satisfy itself that decisions regarding redesign or targeting of services do not unreasonably impact specific groups or communities and that, where such impacts have been identified, consideration is given to mitigating actions. The Resources Directorate recognises that there is more work to do here in terms of relationship-building with colleagues across the organisation to establish even more effective ways of working as it relates to the capturing equalities data.

Robustness of systems and processes

61. The Resources Directorate has the lead role in developing the Council's strategic and policy framework on equalities. However, it is also recognised that the purpose and focus of strategy and policy should not simply be to establish standards, it should be to effect ways of working. In this regard, there is a greater role for business governance, whether that be at directorate, service or corporate level in ensuring that business standards are exemplified through custom and practice. To ensure that this happens the Directorate continues to work on improving its approach to governance and oversight.

Gaps in data breadth and depth

62. It is acknowledged that for some protected characteristics, data capture is better than for others. For example, race, disability, gender and age are characteristics where this information is more readily available (subject people being willing to declare). By contrast gender reassignment and sexual orientation are examples of protected characteristics where the volume and variability of data for analysis and decision-making is limited.