



Equalities Committee

Monday 13 July 2015 at 6.00 pm

Board Room 7 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley HA9 0FJ

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Pavey (Chair)

Harrison

Kansagra

Tatler

Thomas

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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members.

Item **Page**

1 **Declarations of interests**

Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant financial or other interest in the items on this agenda.

2 **Roles and responsibilities**

Terms of reference

1. To oversee the council's achievement and maintenance of the Excellent Standard in the Equalities Framework for Local Government
2. To monitor the progress of the Equalities and HR Policies Review Action Plan
3. To meet quarterly

3 **Deputations (if any)**

4 **Equalities Framework for Local Government : self assessment report** 1 - 90

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Christine Gilbert, Chief Executive
Tel: 020 8937 1007
christine.gilbert@brent.gov.uk

5 **Equalities and HR review: action plan** 91 - 122

This report attaches the Review of Equalities and HR Policies and Practices in Brent and the supporting Action Plan.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Christine Gilbert, Chief Executive
Tel: 020 8937 1007
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6 **Date of next meeting**

The committee is to meet quarterly. No date has yet been set for the next meeting. The committee is asked if it wants to set a programme of meetings for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

7 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

Date of the next meeting: To be confirmed



Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.

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“Our Journey to Excellent”

**A Submission for Excellence in the Equality
Framework for Local Government**

Narrative Report

July 2015

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our vision is to make Brent a great place to live and work, where people feel that they have real opportunities to change their lives for the better, where they feel that they and their children are safe and cared for and achieve well, and where they receive excellent services when they need them. A place where business and enterprise can prosper and where local people can find employment; a place with plentiful access to arts, leisure and cultural activities; a place where people from different backgrounds feel at ease with one another; a place where the principles of fairness, equality, good citizenship and respect for people and place are valued.
- 1.2 Brent's leadership, staff and partnership agencies all share an understanding that equality and diversity are central to the achievement of this vision for the borough. We take pride in Brent's reputation as a beacon for cultural diversity and community cohesion, and continue to uphold the values of fairness, respect for people, diversity and excellence in all our services. That is why Brent Council committed to working towards the highest level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) at a time when we are responding to serious financial challenges that have required fundamental changes to the way that local services are commissioned and delivered. In meeting these challenges, we believe that the focus must be on equality and fairness to protect the most vulnerable groups in our community.
- 1.3 While undergoing intensive transformation to deliver significant levels of financial savings, we have used the EFLG to structure a journey of improvement on equalities. Working towards the EFLG has helped us to build on a foundation of good practice to become more:
- confident in our understanding of local communities
 - collaborative in our approach to building and sharing our knowledge about local communities across council services, with elected members and with our partners
 - creative in how we engage with partners and community groups to meet the challenges facing local communities
 - committed to an improvement agenda, motivating both staff and communities.

Our context

- 1.4 Brent's population has increased by 18 per cent over the past ten years to 312,000, placing increased demand on council services. We are now the fifth largest of the London boroughs and we are the fourteenth most densely populated area in the country. The number of under five year olds has increased by 37 per cent and those aged 5 - 19 years by eight per cent; the population aged 85 and over increased by 24 per cent in the last five years and is projected to increase by a further 31 per cent over the next five years. Overall, Brent has a younger than average population, often living in extended families.
- 1.5 Brent is also one of the most culturally diverse boroughs in the UK. People from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME) now make up 64 per cent of the total population. We continue to welcome new communities today, such as the growing Eastern European, Filipino and Somali populations and 150 languages are spoken in the borough. We are proud of our historic ability to welcome people from different cultures, support their integration and create a context in which people from

different backgrounds feel they get on well together. The cultural diversity of the borough and the cohesion between our different communities are major factors in Brent's characteristic vibrancy and dynamism.

- 1.6 The diversity of the council's workforce closely reflects the wider community of Brent, although currently BAME staff are underrepresented at senior management levels. We actively promote the value of such a richly diverse workforce with our partners and providers because it strengthens understanding of the perspectives of the different communities receiving local services. It helps us to develop and deliver effective community engagement, to build stronger communities, and to provide the best quality services, tailored to user needs.
- 1.7 There is much to be valued in Brent as a place to live, work and do business. It is home to the iconic Wembley Stadium, the Wembley Arena and the spectacular Swaminarayan Hindu Temple, and our borough is the destination for thousands of British and international visitors every year. We are served by some of the best road and rail transport links in London. Our population is young, dynamic, entrepreneurial and growing. We have award winning parks and fine open spaces, good schools, and a vibrant cultural offer. Brent 's vibrancy, close proximity to the London job market and strongly established community support networks continue to attract a diverse range of people to work and make their home here.

For more information about the diversity of Brent's population, please see Appendix 1.

Our challenges

- 1.8 Brent's commitment to equality has never been more relevant than now. We are working in the context of a challenging financial climate which is impacting heavily on our residents and on the services that are provided and commissioned by councils. By 2018, the council's budget will have been cut in half. Poverty, unemployment and adult skills levels are key challenges for the borough, underpinning the pressing need to promote growth in job opportunities, to encourage and support residents to access them and to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.9 The median household income in Brent is the third lowest in London. One in every three children in the borough is living in poverty and this increases to 50 per cent in our most deprived wards. Brent has the fifth highest private rent levels in London, making even two bedroom properties unaffordable for many on average earnings. There is a greater reliance in Brent than many other places on benefits and social housing. For families affected by the benefit cap, larger homes are not affordable and even two bedroom accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult to find.
- 1.10 Living in poverty generally contributes to poorer health, well-being and social isolation. People on low incomes in Brent are more likely to have a life-limiting health condition, take less exercise and have a shorter life. Obesity is an increasing concern, and more people are experiencing mental health problems.
- 1.11 Protecting the most vulnerable in our communities and helping them to improve their quality of life means reducing poverty levels, the inequality in wages levels, promoting the London Living Wage, and supporting independence and choice. We need to develop practical responses to issues such as fuel debt, expensive childcare,

loan sharks and poor health outcomes related to poverty. We plan to do this by working collaboratively with our residents, our public service partners in the NHS, the police and fire service, housing associations, local businesses and our voluntary and community sector partners towards our common goals.

Our structure

- 1.12 Brent is a Labour-run council. Our political leadership is highly diverse and representative of the local community: 16 per cent of Members are disabled; 60 per cent are BAME; and 40 per cent are female. Cllr Muhammed Butt, the Leader, has responsibility for equality and diversity on the council's Cabinet. We are delighted that Cllr Butt has recently been elected as London Councils' Lead Member for Equalities to lead on developing and directing London Councils' policy in this area. Cllr Michael Pavey, the Deputy Leader, has an overarching responsibility for equality and diversity in the borough. All elected Members take seriously their responsibilities for championing equality, promoting cohesion and fostering good relations within their constituencies.
- 1.13 The corporate Diversity Reference Group provides senior leadership and strategic direction for developing and implementing excellent equality and diversity policy, practice and service delivery. The Diversity Reference Group was established in 2013 and is chaired by Christine Gilbert, Chief Executive. It reports annually to Brent's Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet on progress against the equality strategy and action plan and on the diversity profile of our residents, service users and workforce. The Diversity Reference Group has steered Brent's journey towards the EFLG.
- 1.14 There are four council departments:
- Adults Social Care, which comprises Commissioning, Direct Services, Reablement & Safeguarding and Support Planning & Review
 - the Chief Operating Officer's Department, which comprises Community Services, Corporate & Business Support and Strategic Commissioning
 - Children & Young People, which comprises Early Help, Education and Social Care
 - Regeneration & Growth, which comprises Housing & Employment, Planning & Regeneration and Property & Projects.
- 1.15 A senior manager from each council department sits on the Diversity Reference Group and leads their Departmental Equality Group. The Departmental Equality Groups form a link between the Diversity Reference Group and council departments and services, acting as equality champions to promote good practice on equality and human rights across all functions of the council.
- 1.16 The Diversity Reference Group and Departmental Equality Groups are supported by an Equality Team, comprising a Head of Equality and two Equality Officers. The Equality Team was restructured in late 2013 to have a greater partnership role and outward focus, and to increase the seniority of the Head of Equality to reflect the importance of this role in the council. The Equality Team works proactively with all areas of the council and local partners to drive improvements in equalities.

Brent Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019

- 1.17 Brent's [Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019](#) and [Equality Policy](#) were launched in April 2015 along with the Equality Strategy Action Plan 2015-16 which will be updated annually. The new Equality Strategy replaces and builds upon the foundations of good practice laid by our previous Single Equality Schemes and [equality objectives](#). It offers a refreshed vision of how the council can become a model of outstanding practice on equality and diversity that is appropriate to our current context, such as by exploring new forms of partnership and community engagement.
- 1.18 Together the Equality Strategy and Policy set out how we will promote equality and diversity in all that we do - as a leading organisation in the borough, as a provider and commissioner of services, and as an employer - to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Brent. Everyone who works for the council is responsible for helping to deliver the Equality Strategy and for conducting themselves in line with the principles in the Equality Policy.
- 1.19 Brent's previous equality objectives had focused on the implementation of processes such as equality monitoring and analysis. Ways in which we progressed against these objectives included:
- improving our evidence base by launching 'Brent Data' – a website to bring together a wide range of datasets and statistics to help us to shape services and address inequality
 - using performance data relating to equality efficiently to improve services such as Looked After Children and rough sleepers' services
 - strengthening the role of equalities considerations in our procurement and commissioning processes.
- 1.20 The implementation of the previous equality objectives meant that we had a robust base upon which to build our new objectives and strategy for 2015-19. We were keen to move towards a greater emphasis on outcomes to drive improvements for residents, service users and staff. We set five equality and human rights objectives in the Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019 in order to achieve key equalities outcomes for those who live and work in Brent:
1. To know and understand all our communities
 2. To involve our communities effectively
 3. To demonstrate leadership in equalities and human rights, both within the council and amongst partners, and organisational commitment to excellence
 4. To ensure that local public services are responsive to different needs and treat users with dignity and respect
 5. To develop and sustain a skilled and committed workforce able to meet the needs of all local people.
- 1.21 The priorities and objectives set out in the Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019 were agreed following extensive consultation with Members, staff, residents and stakeholders across the borough. We also reviewed good practice within and beyond the sector and were heavily influenced by the EFLG.

For more information, please see the Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019, the Equality Strategy Action Plan 2015 - 2016 and the Equality Policy.

2. Knowing our communities

- 2.1 To work effectively in such a diverse setting as Brent with a rapidly changing population, we need a robust understanding of the changing identities and needs of all our local communities. Since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, Brent has developed a strong evidence base of information about residents, service users and staff. This information is all published on [Brent Data](#), a section of our website developed in 2012 to present our evidence base and share it with local partners.
- 2.2 This information has enabled us to identify and address inequalities and the needs of different equality groups. For example, we used evidence about changes to the ethnicity of Looked After Children (while Black Caribbean children remained the largest group, there was an increase in the representation of White British, Somali and Eastern European children) to target services at children at risk of coming into the system who could be better cared for at home. This led to a reduction of Looked After Children to 47 per 10,000 child population by September 2012, comparing favourably with the rate of 63 per 10,000 for our statistical neighbours.
- 2.3 More recently, we undertook the projects set out below to ensure that a robust understanding of the realities of our residents' lives informs our planning and decision making so that we can ensure best quality services and deliver better outcomes for all of our residents.

Service user diversity profiles

- 2.4 We have produced a series of diversity profiles: for the borough, for each of our 21 wards and for different service areas. Each profile presents information from a range of data sources in an accessible and engaging format. In addition to providing a detailed overview of the diversity and intersectionality of service users, the profiles highlight population changes over time and variations in key service outcomes for different equality groups. Collectively, the profiles offer a revealing picture of what makes Brent distinctive and the nuances of the borough's diversity. The diversity profiles were shortlisted for the Local Area Research and Intelligence Awards 2015.
- 2.5 Officers are encouraged to use the diversity profiles to inform corporate and business planning, to identify and address gaps in service use and outcomes, and to support a more rigorous and thoughtful approach to equality analysis. In September 2014, we ran a well-attended series of workshops for staff on the issues raised by the diversity profiles and how they should inform service development and delivery. Following positive feedback from attendees, this presentation has been incorporated into our corporate induction which is mandatory for all new starters. All public service providers in the borough can access the profiles through Brent Data to develop a better understanding of the changing identities and needs of Brent's residents.

For more information about the diversity profiles, please see the [Brent Diversity Profile](#), the [Wembley Central Diversity Profile](#) and the [Adult Social Care Service User Profile](#).

Residents' Attitudes Survey 2014

- 2.6 The council carried out a comprehensive Residents' Attitudes Survey in 2014, which involved face to face interviews with 2,100 residents (100 from each ward) chosen to

be representative of the diversity of the overall population. Survey participants were asked to provide a range of demographic information about themselves and their families, including their equality characteristics and socio-economic status, how long they have lived in Brent, whether they are renters or homeowners and far more. This information has been analysed to understand which residents are affected by specific issues and what different groups of residents think about a range of issues.

- 2.7 The survey findings demonstrated increased satisfaction from residents since the last survey on this scale was carried out in 2009 and positive comparisons with Local Government Association benchmarks:
- 84 per cent are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
 - 67 per cent are satisfied with the way the council runs things
 - the proportion of people who agree that Brent is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well with one another has increased from 74 per cent in 2009 to 84 per cent
 - the proportion of people who agree that the council listens to local people has increased from 37 per cent in 2009 to 42 per cent.
- 2.8 The survey results provided an insight into how current service provision is meeting the needs and expectations of our residents. We learned that the key priorities for most residents are community safety, clean streets, transport and parks and that residents would like to see more money being spent on these areas and health services. The survey results formed a key part of the consultation process for the development of the Brent Borough Plan 2015 - 2019 and informed the priorities that have been set for the borough in the plan.

For more information about resident involvement in the development of the Brent Borough Plan, please see Case Study 10 – Brent Borough Plan Development

Monitoring performance

- 2.9 Brent's commitment to monitoring and evaluating equalities data goes well beyond our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Organisation-wide and departmental equalities objectives and key performance indicators have been set in line with the priorities in the Brent Borough Plan and Equality Strategy. Progress against these key performance indicators is reviewed on a regular basis by Departmental Equality Groups, Departmental Management Teams, the Diversity Reference Group and the Corporate Management Team.
- 2.10 Officers can benchmark their performance and compare progress across objectives both internally and with similar organisations. Staff use a bespoke version of inPhase (a performance and business management database) to monitor their performance across a range of equality key performance indicators and data is reviewed regularly on a customisable data dashboard. For information on service users, we use the Client Index system which provides a hub of information about Brent service users, populated with regular extracts from Brent databases in areas such as council tax, housing benefit, the electoral register and social care. This enables staff to fully understand residents through accurate and accessible single customer records.

3. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

- 3.1 Brent's commitment to diversity and equality lies at the heart of our vision, objectives, priorities and plans. Our political leaders and senior officers have always acted as champions for equality and diversity and their commitment has been the key driver behind our journey towards the Excellent level of the EFLG. To support Members to carry out their role as ambassadors for equality, we have run training sessions for them on the diversity of the borough, the Equality Act 2010, unconscious bias and challenging prejudice.
- 3.2 One priority of our Single Equality Scheme 2012 was to work in partnership with voluntary and community led organisations to ensure that services are delivered to the wider community. This helped us to develop relationships with partners who are more representative of all our local communities. As a result, we now work with a wide range of partners to foster good relations and build resilient, cohesive communities that take pride in their neighbourhoods.
- 3.3 For example, rough sleeping in Brent increased by 500 per cent from 2009 to 2012. A group of Eastern European homeless men, many with mental health needs, started sleeping rough inside two derelict garages, causing a nuisance to local residents. We worked with a number of local partners - including residents, homelessness charities, the police, and ward councillors - to resolve the issue sensitively to the benefit of all by removing the rough sleepers from the garages and signposting them to support services to address their needs. We have continued to work with these partners to develop and deliver interventions to support rough sleepers and prevent them from causing a nuisance.

Leadership at Brent

- 3.4 Our political leadership has become renowned nationally and locally for championing borough and London-wide equality issues. For example, Brent announced plans to become the first local authority in the country to offer business rates discounts as an incentive for paying the London Living Wage in November 2014. All staff directly employed by the council have been made the living wage since November 2013. We were concerned that approximately 30 per cent of Brent residents currently earn less than the living wage, which is the amount a person needs to cover the basic costs of living. Up to 200 businesses in Brent could benefit from this initiative, meaning that some of the lowest paid workers in the borough will see their pay increase by around £2.50 per hour. Cllr Roxanne Mashari, Lead Member for Employment and Skills, said: 'We are committed to championing the living wage and tackling the root causes of poverty in our borough... Many hard-working people on low wages struggle to make ends meet and it is up to councils like ours to do everything we can to ensure that a fair day's work leads to a fair day's pay.'
- 3.5 Our senior leaders have also chosen to use their influence to raise the profile of equalities within Brent. For example, Cllr Butt spoke passionately and authentically about his personal commitment to equality to residents, service users, staff and local service providers at our events to mark LGBT History Month, International Women's Day, Black History Month and International Day for Disabled People. Cllr Pavey undertook an in depth review of the council's HR and Equalities policies and practices in December 2014, producing 31 recommendations to strengthen inclusion

and increase the diversity of staff at senior levels. The Chief Executive regularly highlights equality issues and initiatives in her blog that is sent directly to all staff.

For more information about Cllr Pavey's review of HR and Equality policies, please see 6.8.

Brent Borough Plan 2015 - 2019

- 3.6 The [Brent Borough Plan 2015 - 2019](#) sets out how we will go about building a better Brent together with everyone who has a stake in the future of the borough. Led by the council working with Partners for Brent (the Local Strategic Partnership), it is an ambitious plan for the future of the borough. The plan is based on the results of the Residents' Attitudes Survey and extensive consultation with local communities on the things that mattered most to them and their suggestions for making Brent an even better place to live and work. Service and Corporate Plans are linked to the Borough Plan through objectives and a shared vision for Brent.
- 3.7 Through the council, stakeholders, residents and partners working together, the Borough Plan aims to make Brent a great place to live and work and a:
- safer, more attractive and more environmentally-friendly borough
 - borough with good quality housing and engaging arts and leisure facilities
 - more inclusive borough, for those who live and work here including our children, young people and vulnerable residents
 - borough with greater opportunities for people to achieve work and prosper
 - healthy borough where residents are supported and cared for when they need it most.

For more information about resident involvement in the development of the Brent Borough Plan, please see Case Study 10 – Brent Borough Plan Development.

Recent examples of partnership working to promote equalities and good relations

- 3.8 Brent works closely with a wide range of partners to tackle local inequalities and strengthen community engagement mechanisms. Partners for Brent is the Local Strategic Partnership that brings together a range of public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations responsible for delivering services at a local level. Its aims are to inform, consult and engage with Brent residents and act as an advisory body to the council on its decision making.
- 3.9 In March 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group published a report on preventing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based violence in the borough. Research conducted by a national charity in 2010 had demonstrated that Brent had the second highest number of women who had undergone Female Genital Mutilation that gave birth to children in England and Wales. The Task Group gathered data on VAWG incidents in the borough from the police and voluntary and community organisations and made a number of recommendations to improve practices and joint working. A VAWG Strategy Group was set up to bring together a wide range of partner agencies to carry out these recommendations, including mapping the number of women and girls at risk, raising awareness within local communities, training key staff and working jointly with schools and health agencies to share information. This

has already led to positive outcomes, such as taking action to protect young girls who were identified as being at risk of forced marriage. We also used our Ward Working budget in Stonebridge to fund an innovative programme organised by the Help Somalia Foundation, the Asian Women's Resource Centre and FORWARD to educate and empower women, young people and soon-to-be parents about Female Genital Mutilation.

- 3.9 In August 2014 we supported the NHS Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Governing Body to carry out an independent review of patient engagement and equalities. The review made a recommendation for the CCG to collaborate more closely with the council, in particular our Health and Wellbeing Board, and other local agencies to strengthen the momentum towards more integrated services and greater emphasis on prevention. We have begun to explore mechanisms through which to improve partnership and engagement in respect of the Better Care Fund and the Integrated Care Model and are also supporting the CCG to develop a Health Partners Forum to engage local people in the shaping of local health services, primary care and hospital service development.
- 3.10 Brent's Prevent Advisory Forum brings together statutory and community partners to provide a network of credible voices who understand the Prevent Strategy alongside the needs of the local community. The group is chaired by Cllr James Denselow, the Lead Member for Stronger Communities, and is attended by representatives from the CVS, police, Brent Multi Faith Forum and religious communities, youth organisations and local community groups. The Prevent Advisory Forum aims to identify the most suitable avenues to challenge extremism and build community resilience locally. When the English Defence League organised demonstrations in Brent in 2014, the Prevent Advisory Forum members were able to agree and successfully communicate a local response to prevent any violent responses and reduce community tensions.

Brent Social Mobility Commission

- 3.11 In 2013 the council set up a Commission on Social Mobility to address concerns that the benefits of economic growth within Brent had not been experienced equally by all parts of the community. We wanted to make sure that those people most badly affected by the recession would be able to benefit fully from economic recovery. A panel of independent commissioners was brought together to develop ideas and practical actions that could enhance opportunities for local people to improve their living standards. The panel gathered evidence through discussions with community groups, voluntary sector partners and local businesses.
- 3.12 The Commission's report was published in 2014. We are now in the process of implementing its recommendations: to improve the way we store and analyse data on clients (already addressed through improving our Client Index); to increase the supply and improve the quality of housing (being addressed through our Housing Strategy); to introduce greater regulation of the private rented sector (already fully implemented); and to attract new investment to support growth within the borough.

Tackling inequalities through procurement

- 3.13 Brent's procurement and commissioning processes are underpinned by sound equalities practices, which are reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for

purpose. This ensures that all of the council's contractors and suppliers comply with our equality and diversity standards. The [Supply Brent portal](#) was set up to link local businesses to supply chain opportunities and to assist local residents in securing employment. This has assisted local businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to benefit from council contracts. For example, 25 local companies and 133 local operatives worked on the building of Brent Civic Centre.

- 3.14 More recently, we have used procurement to tackle local health inequalities. There are significant health inequalities in Brent, linked to our cultural diversity and low average incomes. For example, the gap in life expectancy between men in the most affluent and the most deprived parts of the borough is 8.8 years. Brent recognises that improving the wellbeing and prosperity of those individuals and communities who experience health inequalities and disadvantages requires a joined-up approach between the council and its key health partners.
- 3.15 In 2014/15 the Public Health Team commissioned new drug and alcohol services, sexual health services, school nursing services and post health check support and community services. The robust procurement processes and comprehensive guidance on procurement and equalities encouraged the Public Health Team to take into account a range of equality considerations and to involve service users at all stages of the procurement process. For example, Recovery Champions made key decisions about service design and helped to evaluate tenders for drugs and alcohol services. As a result, the team commissioned effective targeted services such as HIV prevention for young people and BAME groups, and women-only drug and alcohol services to support women at risk of being involved in sexual exploitation.

For more information about our work to tackle local health inequalities, please see the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).

Tackling inequalities in education

- 3.16 In 2014 the Brent Scrutiny Committee reviewed the council's approach to narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils (eligible for the pupil premium) and non-disadvantaged pupils in the borough. The committee scrutinised the work of the council over the previous years, consulted with pupils and young people in Brent and produced a report with recommendations. It noted that the most recent Brent data showed that Brent's disadvantaged pupil premium performance for Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and maths is above the national averages, but is still below that of their peers who are not disadvantaged.
- 3.17 In January 2015 the Minister of State for Schools, David Laws MP, wrote to six Brent primary schools to congratulate them on the improvement in the Key Stage 2 results of their disadvantaged pupils since 2011 and wrote to a further three primary schools, to congratulate them on the improvement since 2012. In Brent, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is narrowing across many areas of school learning. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils attaining five GCSE grades A* - C narrowed by one percentage point; the gap at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics narrowed by three percentage points to seven percentage points; and the gap between Brent disadvantaged pupils and the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils narrowed by one percentage point to 14 percentage points.

4. Involving our communities

- 4.1 Brent has developed a number of mechanisms to involve our communities in helping to shape local priorities and reducing inequalities in service delivery. Our Single Equality Scheme 2012 led to a review of our overall approach to consultation to improve engagement with minority groups who were less likely to be heard. This enabled us to engage with residents and stakeholders on key local issues, such as welfare reform which was expected to lead to Brent residents suffering the greatest financial loss in London. Community engagement helped us to gain a deeper insight into the likely impact of welfare reform on minority groups and to keep local communities informed of upcoming changes. We established a dedicated team that worked closely with Job Centre Plus and other partners to direct help to the households worst affected by benefit changes and to limit the impact of welfare reform on our most vulnerable residents. As a result, although lone parents and Black ethnic groups were disproportionately impacted by the overall benefits cap, the team achieved correspondingly higher resolutions for their cases through employment or relocation.
- 4.2 Brent's new Borough Plan 2015 - 2019 outlines our approach to using new and creative forms of community engagement so that all of our residents - including under-represented groups - feel that they can participate in public life and that the council listens to them. Our aspirational and ambitious vision for the borough can only be achieved if everyone with a stake in the borough works together with a clear focus on our common goals. To maintain high standards of service in the face of rising demand and falling funding, we have recognised that we need to build a new relationship with our local communities. The new Borough Plan places more emphasis on building cohesive, resilient communities and increasing civic participation and engagement, such as through encouraging volunteering. In the Residents' Attitude Survey 2014, 41 per cent of residents said they would be prepared to help run a local service and 26 per cent said that the motivation to do this would be to 'be a part of my community'.
- 4.3 Partners for Brent held a strategic meeting in February 2015 to discuss how the partnership would need to progress to support the implementation of the Borough Plan in light of this refreshed approach. Partners for Brent supports this shift from viewing residents as passive users of council services to partners who can shape and influence the services they receive.

Engagement structures

- 4.4 Brent has a multitude of approaches to engaging and listening to our communities, from service user forums and focus groups to events and weeks of action in our local communities. Our consultation and engagement forums include:
- **Brent Connects Forums:** resident forums facilitated by Members which are a central part of consultation and engagement. Brent Connects Forums cover both geographic areas and service user groups. Issues raised at these forums range from local parking to partnerships with neighbouring councils.
 - **Service user groups:** forums for users of particular services, such as the BHeard Service User Group for Adults Social Care service users. BHeard

plays a key role in procurement and commissioning exercises and will be involved in the appointment of a new Service User and Carer Engagement and Involvement Officer role in May 2015.

- **Brent Citizen's Panel:** a partnership project between the council, the police and Brent Health Action Zone. The Citizen's Panel provides a platform for 2,000 local residents to contribute their views on local services.
- **Brent Youth Parliament:** a group of 53 young people (aged from 10 - 19 years) elected by their peers to debate issues such as gang culture, education and careers, citizenship and national identity, crime and health.
- **Brent Multi Faith Forum:** a group established to provide an opportunity for all faith communities to have greater influence in Brent. The Multi Faith Forum meets quarterly with council representatives and facilitates events to engage residents across all faiths with council activities. These have recently included events on supporting people with dementia, preventing terrorism and extremism, and encouraging under-represented groups to register to vote.

Please see 6.17 for information about how we consult and engage staff.

- 4.5 Brent also uses online surveys to consult with residents and community groups on proposed changes to services such as the Housing Allocation Scheme and youth support services. There has been a notable increase in participation in these online surveys over the past few years. Our equalities monitoring shows that a diverse and representative range of residents are participating in online consultations.

Community involvement in budget development

- 4.6 Involving our communities has been central to the way that Brent has responded to the financial challenges that we are facing. When setting the [Budget 2015/16](#), the council had to make difficult decisions to achieve £54 million of savings over the next two years, due to cuts in central government funding. To inform the decision making process, the Cabinet decided to conduct a large scale public consultation with residents, the voluntary and community sector, local businesses and other groups on the draft savings proposals and their consequences.
- 4.7 Key messages emerging from the consultation responses were that: council spending should be focused on core front line services for the most vulnerable members of the community, particularly in children's services and adult social care; that local community groups have a strong appetite to co-design neighbourhood services; and the importance of the strong community networks that exist in Brent. As a direct result of consultation responses, it was agreed not to take forward proposals to reduce respite and day care for adults social service users, to close a leisure centre or to close local children's centres.

For further information on the consultation process that shaped the Budget 2015/16, please see Case Study 11 – Budget 2014/15 Development.

Participation in public life

- 4.8 Our political leadership regularly hold their meetings in community locations to promote transparency and encourage local people to get involved and make sure their voices are heard. Recent Cabinet meetings have been held in the Pakistani Community Centre in Willesden Green and [Patidar House](#) (an arts space for people from all cultures run by a Gujarati Hindu Patel community organisation) in Wembley.
- 4.9 In 2015, changes to electoral registration meant that ten per cent of Brent's electorate dropped off the electoral register - mostly young people, traveller communities, people living in residential care homes and BAME residents - and risked becoming disenfranchised from democratic processes. The council worked closely with community groups including Mencap, Brent CVS and Brent Multi Faith Forum to promote the benefits of registration and engagement with both local and national democratic processes to these groups. This resulted in an increase of 19,000 registered voters in Brent.

For more information about the Voter Registration Project, please see Case Study 5 – Electoral Registration Project.

5. Responsive services and customer care

- 5.1 Brent's commitment to equality and human rights is integrated into our business planning and delivery, including service level procurement, resource allocation and performance management. We have been conducting equality analysis (formerly known as equality impact assessments) since 2003 to ensure that the potential impacts of our policies and services on different equality groups are understood and that our services are accessible to all. Equality analysis is conducted on all proposals put to our Cabinet so that equality considerations can inform our decision-making.
- 5.2 Through robust equality analysis, we have consistently ensured that the best possible quality local services are provided, appropriate to the diverse and changing needs of all our residents, to deliver positive outcomes for our service users. For some examples of how we have done this, please see:
- the BHeard User Group Case Study (14) which shows how Adults Social Care is responding to the needs of disabled service users and residents
 - the Harlesden Town Centre Regeneration Project Case Study (17) which demonstrates how the Chief Operating Officer's Department worked with the local community to improve and shape the accessibility of the Harlesden area
 - the Somali Community Engagement Case Study (6) in which the Children & Young People's Department responded to communities' needs for information on fostering and adoption in Brent
 - the Community Access Programme Case Study (21) which demonstrates how the Regeneration & Growth Department is involving residents in the development of changing service delivery.

Refreshing the equality analysis process

- 5.3 Equality analysis has been core to policy development and decision making at Brent for over ten years. We view equality analysis as an essential tool to put our values into practice, by helping officers and Members to give thoughtful consideration to how our work could affect people in different ways and whether our policies and practices are fair. Over the past year, the Diversity Reference Group reviewed our equality analysis processes and developed a new approach that would support the council to negotiate the challenges facing the borough in the years ahead successfully.
- 5.4 In January 2015, we rolled out this new approach and introduced an online equality analysis system, which makes use of technology to ensure that equality analyses are conducted in a timely manner. As part of this change, we ensured that rigorous equality analysis was embedded into all business processes, including business planning, procurement, financial decision-making and restructuring exercises. The launch of the new process was supported by a communications and training programme to build understanding of the importance of equality analysis.
- 5.5 Our new approach has: made the equality analysis process more robust, user-friendly and effective; equipped officers with the confidence and insight to perform equality analysis to a high standard; and promoted the message that 'knowing our

communities' has to be at the heart of effective equality analysis. Departmental Equality Groups took on responsibility for auditing equality analyses which has encouraged departments to take greater ownership over the process, to ensure that equality analyses are started at the earliest possible stage, and to share learning from equality analyses. The Equality Team has shared learning about Brent's new approach to equality analysis with the London Equality Network and the London Project and Programme Management Forum.

For more information about refreshing the equality analysis process, please see Case Study 22 – Equality Analysis System Review.

Brent's Customer Promise

- 5.6 In 2014, we updated the [Brent Customer Promise](#), a public pledge which states that our customers have the right to expect good quality, easily accessible council services and information. The Customer Promise places an emphasis on treating people as individuals and responding to their individual needs. All staff have been trained on the values behind our Customer Promise to achieve a standardised approach to customer care across the council.

Community Access Programme

- 5.8 Brent's Customer Promise and increasingly customer-focused approach lies behind our Community Access Programme which was agreed by the Cabinet in October 2014. This transformation programme will improve the way that service users engage with the council and increase the accessibility of our services. The programme aims to support residents to become more self sufficient in managing their interactions with the council and to improve customer care. By improving the efficiency of service delivery, the programme will also contribute major financial savings.
- 5.9 One major plank of the programme is a move towards accessing services online across most areas of the council. For some residents who are used to accessing services on a face to face basis, this will be a different way of interacting with the council. Concerns were raised about the potential impacts on some vulnerable groups of service users, including older people and disabled people. We undertook comprehensive consultation, focus groups, surveys, research and data analysis to inform the equality analysis for the implementation of the programme.
- 5.10 The equality analysis identified a number of potential negative equality impacts and we have put mitigations in place to reduce their impact, including a commitment that our most vulnerable service users will always be able to access face to face services. The effectiveness of these mitigations is reviewed regularly by the programme board. We were also heartened to identify positive impacts for many groups of service users and to learn that two thirds of Brent residents possess the skills and technology to access digital services and would be inclined to use them more if that would help protect other council activities from cuts.

For more information about the Community Access Programme, please see Case Study 21 – Community Access Programme and the Equality Analysis of the Community Access Programme in the evidence portfolio.

Flexible childcare scheme

- 5.11 Brent is the only council in the country that is offering a flexible child-minding service, which offers families access to affordable childcare at short notice, overnight and at weekends. The flexible child-minding pool, which was launched in March 2014, provides vital support to parents working irregular hours or shift work, or who are juggling other commitments such as job interviews.
- 5.12 The service was introduced after a survey of local parents and carers revealed that difficulties finding flexible, affordable child care were the main barrier preventing many jobseekers - especially women - from attending job interviews, working shift patterns and taking up employment. Employment rates in Brent are below the average for London: women have lower employment rates than men and black people have the lowest employment rates of all ethnic groups. We developed and launched the flexible childcare scheme to support more residents into work.
- 5.13 The scheme is promoted through Brent's Children and Families Information Service, JobCentre Plus, the Citizens' Advice Bureau and a range of community organisations. The scheme won the Innovation Award at the Local Government Chronicle national awards who were impressed with the level of enthusiasm that had been dedicated to a simple yet innovative solution to tackle local unemployment. Over 40 children currently benefit from the scheme. Cllr Muhammed Butt said: ' We are a listening council and we are responding to the needs of our residents who have told us that the lack of flexible childcare at short-notice is a barrier to finding gainful employment. This family-friendly scheme is a stepping stone to employment which supports our residents to help themselves and we want other local authorities to learn from us.'

For more information about the Flexible Childcare Scheme, please see Case Study 19 – Flexible Childcare Scheme.

Brent Civic Centre

- 5.14 [Brent Civic Centre](#) opened in 2013, bringing service users and over 2,000 staff together in a fully accessible environment with spacious and well-equipped public areas (including a library, event facilities, prayer rooms and a customer services centre) and innovative office space. The council consulted closely with staff and service users, especially disabled people and faith groups, to develop the designs for Brent Civic Centre.
- 5.15 Since Brent Civic Centre opened, the council has tested how well it is working for staff and service users and made improvements to enhance accessibility further. A Building User Survey carried out in 2014 highlighted that Brent Civic Centre is considered to be safe and accessible with disabled people giving positive feedback on toilets, corridors and catering. Areas for improvement identified included heating and car parking facilities. A further Building User Survey is scheduled to take place in summer 2015.
- 5.16 We also commissioned an external Accessibility Audit in August 2014. The Audit found that routes were accessible, that staff are present to help residents and service users in public areas and praised the visual and audible alarm and lift systems. The

Audit identified weaker areas and provided recommendations to address them. The Facilities Management Team allocated £75,000 for an action plan to implement these recommendations. Improvements already implemented include the installation of a Changing Places toilet, way-finding improvements, the introduction of height-adjustable desks in the customer services centre, and adding bright logo stickers to meeting room doors to assist people with visual impairments.

For more information about the Civic Centre Access Audit, please see Case Study 20 – Civic Centre Accessibility Audit.

6. A skilled and committed workforce

- 6.1 Brent is proud of our record of recruiting and retaining a diverse, highly skilled and motivated workforce, which enables us to meet the needs of all local people. Our commitment to equality and diversity is integral to all employment policies, practices and procedures. We continually seek new ways to create an even more inclusive workplace where all of our diverse employees feel engaged and able to be themselves and are responsive to the needs of local communities.

Our workforce diversity

- 6.2 We have produced an Annual Workforce Equalities Report since 2000. This report presents an overview of the diversity of our workforce and job applicants, broken down by all of the equality characteristics. This information helps us to analyse the effects of our employment policies and practices on equality and to identify key priorities so that we can take targeted actions to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce.
- 6.3 The evidence within this report is used when updating our annual Equality Strategy Action Plan, setting and reviewing equality objectives, and developing workforce equality initiatives. The key findings of the [Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2013/14](#) were that:
- Brent has the highest number of BAME employees (62 per cent) and is ranked fifth for BAME top earners of all London boroughs, and we have achieved a gender-balanced senior management team.
 - Nonetheless, we recognise that we could still do better in respect of representation of BAME staff at senior management levels. Disabled staff are also under-represented in senior management in comparison with the overall workforce.
 - Brent has excellent retention rates of disabled staff. The number of disabled employees increased over 2013/14 despite a reduction in staffing levels.
 - Brent has excellent retention rates of staff who have returned to work from maternity leave, probably as a result of investment in flexible working practices.
 - There were unexplained changes to the representation of different equality groups during the recruitment process, suggesting a need for more thorough analysis of recruitment equalities data. More comprehensive recruitment data is being analysed for the Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2014-15.
- 6.4 The Annual Workforce Equalities Report is published on our website and shared widely with staff and partners. The report is reviewed annually by Members, the Corporate Management Team, trade unions and the Diversity Reference Group. All of these groups, Departmental Management Teams and Departmental Equality Groups also review workforce equalities metrics and key performance indicators on a regular basis.
- 6.5 Brent carried out an Equal Pay Audit in 2015 which demonstrated that the council's pay policies and procedures are effective in ensuring that men and women receive equal pay for equal work. Overall, there is a gender pay gap of 0.08 per cent for all the staff included in the equal pay audit - an insignificant pay gap that falls well within

the range of acceptability which has been defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. All in-grade gender pay differences identified during the audit could be accounted for by gender differences in length of service within the pay grade.

For more information about our workforce diversity profile, please see the [Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2013/14](#), the Equal Pay Audit March 2015 and the Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2014/15 which will be published in June 2015.

Equalities data refresh

- 6.6 In March 2013, the council undertook a comprehensive staff equalities data refresh programme and for the first time was able to report on all of the equality characteristics protected by law. The data refresh achieved an excellent response rate of 78 per cent. However, a high proportion of staff had not disclosed all of their equality characteristics, making it challenging to get a clear picture of workforce diversity and to take effective actions to improve performance. The launch of Oracle, a new data management system, presented an opportunity to run another equalities data refresh exercise. Oracle allowed staff to use self-service to update their equalities information confidentially for the first time.
- 6.7 The data refresh was championed by the Chief Executive and Departmental Equality Groups who all promoted the message that equalities data is treated confidentially and used to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion at Brent to the benefit of all staff. We also raised staff awareness about the range of disabilities and health conditions that are considered to be a disability under the Equality Act 2010. This exercise resulted in large increases to declaration rates across all of the equality characteristics. Additionally the proportion of staff disclosing that they were disabled increased from eight to ten per cent.

Review of HR and Equalities Policies

- 6.8 Between October 2014 and January 2015, Cllr Pavey undertook a wide-ranging review of the council's HR and Equalities policies and procedures and of our progress towards the EFLG. The methodology consisted of scrutinising documents and policies, discussions with managers and staff, and was supported by the Local Government Association and other external experts in order to ensure objectivity and fairness.
- 6.9 The [review](#) found that Brent is generally a happy and inclusive place to work and that HR policies are sound, although people do not necessarily always apply them consistently. It acknowledged that there is a real challenge in ensuring that people from BAME backgrounds are represented within the senior management team. As a result, the published report detailed 31 specific recommendations for improvement, including implementing a mentoring system to nurture the talent of under-represented groups and introducing compulsory unconscious bias training for all managers and recruiters. An [action plan](#) to implement these recommendations was reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee in April 2015 and a new Equalities Committee of Members, chaired by Cllr Pavey, has been set up to monitor progress against this action plan.

For more information about the Review of HR and Equalities Policies, please see Case Study 24 – HR and Equalities Policies Review.

Break Barriers, Open Doors programme

- 6.10 Our popular Break Barriers, Open Doors communications programme has increased staff engagement with equalities and raised awareness about the importance of all of the equality characteristics for the work of the council. The programme has included events to celebrate LGBT History Month, International Women's Day, Black History Month and International Day for Disabled People, and internal communications to mark other dates including Mental Health Awareness Week and Anti-Bullying Week.
- 6.11 The Break Barriers, Open Doors events are organised in consultation with staff and service user groups and are always well-supported by senior leaders and managers. The events feature a diverse roster of inspiring speakers and facilitate discussion about the barriers, real and perceived, to equality that need to be broken down to enable every individual to thrive in Brent. During 2014 - 15, over 500 staff, service users and partners attended Break Barriers, Open Doors events.
- 6.12 The Break Barriers; Open Doors events complement our formal equality and diversity training programme that aims to equip all staff and managers to understand and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to equalities. We run mandatory training on: equality and diversity at Brent (including an overview of the Public Sector Equality Duty) and disability confidence for all staff; recruitment and selection (including unconscious bias) and equality analysis for all managers; and on providing excellent services in a diverse setting and mental health awareness for all customer-facing staff. Equalities considerations are incorporated into other mandatory training, such as procurement. All staff at Brent Housing Partnership completed a Level 2 NVQ in Equality and Diversity as part of its work towards achieving Leaders in Diversity in 2014.

Flexible working

- 6.13 In 2013 the council condensed 14 of its buildings into the new Brent Civic Centre. As well as providing a more accessible working environment for the majority of our staff to work in, the move to Brent Civic Centre marked the commencement of a flexible work programme to support staff work-life balance and improve productivity. Our revised Flexible Working Policy offers staff a range of different flexible working arrangements to suit the needs of each individual and service area. Brent won the Techworld Special Recognition Award for Innovation in Mobile Working in 2013 for our investment in technology to support flexible working, particularly home working.
- 6.14 Flexible working has become the norm at Brent: a survey in February 2015 found that 82 per cent of staff use one or more of the available flexible working practices. This has changed the relationship between employees and managers in that performance is now measured on outcomes and results, not presence. The success of flexible and remote working at Brent marks a significant culture change for local government. Staff have told us that flexible working arrangements have helped them to manage their work more effectively, to provide better services for residents and to carry out caring responsibilities without impacting on productivity.

Apprenticeship Scheme

- 6.15 In January 2014, the council launched the [Brent Council Apprenticeship Programme](#) to address rising levels of youth unemployment in the borough - which was especially

acute within BAME communities and the most deprived areas of Brent. As a major employer in the borough, we wanted to take a leadership role in championing the interests of young people and improving their employability and economic stability. We committed to offering 100 apprenticeship placements over three years and decided to reserve 20 per cent of the places for our Looked After Children to ensure that those young people who experience the greatest disadvantages and barriers to employment would be able to gain access to the programme.

- 6.16 The in-house apprenticeship scheme offers high quality learning and development and a nationally recognised vocational qualification to a wide cross section of local people aged 16 - 24. The programme has been an unqualified success and is now being expanded to provide further opportunities for local young people. Managers have provided excellent feedback and several of the apprentices have already secured permanent employment as a result of participating in the scheme. We introduced an Apprentice of the Year category to our staff awards in December 2014 in recognition of both the council's commitment to the programme and the contribution that apprentices have made to the council.

For more information about the Apprenticeship Scheme, please see Case Study 23 – Apprenticeship Scheme.

Employee engagement

- 6.17 Although Brent does not currently have staff diversity networks, we employ a range of mechanisms to engage and listen to staff at all levels of the council about their experiences and equality, diversity and inclusion issues, including:
- **Equality focus groups:** focus groups with staff and managers organised by the Equality Team. Over 100 people took part in focus groups in 2014 which shaped the Equality Strategy and the Annual Workforce Equalities Report. In April 2015, staff focus groups were used to develop guidance on reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, to develop a leadership programme to support staff from under-represented groups into senior management, and to assess levels of interest in staff diversity networks. As a result, the Corporate Management Team has agreed to re-establish a framework of staff equality networks with senior support.
 - **Staff surveys:** although financial pressures have not permitted us to undertake a comprehensive staff survey recently, we regularly undertake mini staff surveys on issues such as internal communications to engage with staff during organisational change. For example a recent building user survey resulted in the implementation of an improved offer in catering.
 - **Question Time events:** an opportunity for staff to ask questions or address comments directly to the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive and for senior management to hear about what matters to staff. A special Question Time Event was held to enable staff to feed into the development of the Brent Borough Plan 2015-19.
 - **Staff suggestion scheme:** a scheme that invites staff to make suggestions related to the council's priorities at any time for consideration by the

Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis. Recent suggestions have produced outcomes such as improved way-finding around the building and an initiative to publish team profiles with photographs on the organisation's intranet.

Investors in People

- 6.18 Investors in People is a business improvement tool that aims to help organisations develop and improve performance through effective people management. Brent achieved the Silver level of Investors in People in April 2014, which has only been achieved by six per cent of organisations. Following a rigorous assessment, Investors in People concluded that:
- staff are very positive about working for Brent and are extremely committed to the council
 - there is a clear golden thread between the individual, team and the council
 - good people management practices such as regular one to ones and team meetings are in place
 - Brent has an extremely high completion rate for performance appraisals
 - equalities monitoring is seen as of high importance
 - our corporate induction is engaging and effective
 - there are many examples of high quality and innovative learning and development opportunities which have equipped staff to meet the diverse needs of local communities.
- 6.19 We are now working towards the Gold level of Investors in People because we want to keep getting the best out of our staff during the challenging times ahead for local government. We are improving our people management practices by: focusing on our vision and values in everything that we do; increasing the visibility and openness of senior leaders; evaluating the impact of our learning and development offer; and improving our talent management and progression of BAME staff.

7. Our next steps

- 7.1 We are proud of what Brent has achieved so far and the progress we have made on equality, diversity and inclusion for residents, service users and staff. We are committed to our vision of making Brent a great place to live and work, where people feel that they have real opportunities to change their lives for the better. We intend to achieve this vision, even in the context of some of the most pressing financial challenges experienced in public services for decades and increased demand for our services from a growing population with more complex needs.
- 7.2 Our journey towards the Excellent level of the EFLG has helped us to strengthen our structures, systems and practices. It has informed our Corporate Plan, our Equality Strategy and our objectives as a council. It has provided us with a clearer picture of where we are already achieving great equality outcomes for residents and staff and where we want to see improvements. We are committed to the ongoing improvement of our equality and diversity practices and to providing inclusive, accessible services that meet the diverse needs of all our residents.
- 7.3 Our next steps involve everyone with a stake in the borough working closely together with a clear focus on our common goals. In the coming years, we will:

Become more confident in our understanding of local communities by:

- working with partner agencies to develop a greater range of service user diversity profiles
- reviewing progress in implementing the Brent Equality Strategy 2015 - 2019 and achieving our equality objectives annually.

Continue to improve our leadership and partnership equalities work by:

- speaking out to challenge further cuts in central government funding that impact on our most vulnerable residents
- revising the equalities aspects of our procurement process in response to central government changes to procurement.

Enhance the involvement of our communities by:

- introducing new and creative forms of community engagement that engage all equality groups to build more cohesive, resilient communities and find ways of providing services that are more finely tailored to local needs
- matching 1,000 new volunteers a year to placements with local community groups to harness the potential of local people to use their skills and experiences for the benefit of their neighbourhoods.

Ensure we continue to respond to the changing need of our service users by:

- evaluating the impact of our refreshed approach to equality analysis
- implementing the Community Access Programme.

Continue to build a diverse, skilled and committed workforce by:

- implementing the HR and Equalities Policy Review action plan
- establishing a framework of staff equality networks with senior support
- undertaking a full staff survey to collect more detailed information about our workforce's views and experiences so that we can improve our practices.

Appendix 1: The Diversity of Brent

Age

Brent has an increasingly young population: since 2001 the number of under five year olds has increased by 37 per cent and those aged 5-19 years have increased by seven per cent. All children's age groups saw increases between 2001 and 2011, with the 10-14 age group experiencing a nine per cent increase and the 15-19 age group 12 per cent. However the growth of population is not limited to our younger residents. Figures currently indicate that 12.9 per cent of Brent is over the age of 65 (the equivalent of one in every eight people). The population aged over 65 and over increased by nine per cent over the last five years and is projected to increase by a further 11 per cent over the next five years; the population aged over 85 has increased by 24 per cent in the last five years and is projected to increase by 31 per cent over the next five years. We are seeing a gradual change to the ethnicity of our older population too - currently a third of Brent's population aged 85 and over are BAME.

Disability and health

The proportion of Brent residents who feel they have 'good health' increased from 70.2 per cent in 2001 to 82.9 per cent in 2011. 15.6 per cent of Brent's population stated in the 2011 census that they had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability and 4.7 per cent of our residents define themselves as permanently sick or disabled. One in seven Brent residents in 2011 considered that their health had a limiting impact on their day to day activities. This is comparable to the rate for London (14.2 per cent) and is 3.4 per cent lower than the rate for England and Wales. Seven per cent of residents felt their day to day activities were limited a lot and 7.5 per cent felt they were limited a little. The majority of residents who felt that their day to day activities were limited were aged 65 and over. In 2014, 0.8 per cent of Brent residents who were working age (16-64) were claiming disability benefits.

Mental health problems affect one in six people in Brent, and there are approximately 9,000 people in our borough who live with a learning disability. Of these, approximately 1,000 have a learning disability defined as 'severe'.

Ethnicity and language

Brent was the first borough in the country to have a majority BAME population. The diversity of our borough has continued to increase, swelled by recent economic migrants from Eastern Europe and continued growth in the borough's Asian population.

The BAME groups increased their share of the population from 55 per cent in 2001 to 64 per cent in 2011. This is the second highest proportion in England and Wales. The broad BAME group *Asian* or *Asian British* accounts for 33 per cent of Brent's population, and *Black* or *Black British* for 19 per cent. The *White* ethnic group saw a reduction in its proportion from 45 per cent in 2001 to 36 per cent in 2011, with *White British* and *White Irish* also in decline. In contrast, Brent's percentage of residents identifying as *White Other* increased to 14.3 per cent.

A 2011 school census found that 149 languages were spoken in Brent. The national census showed that English was the main language in 57 per cent of Brent households, this was the

2nd lowest rate for any borough in England and Wales. 1.3 per cent of the population in Brent cannot speak English.

Pregnancy & Maternity

The General Fertility Rate (GFR) is the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44. The GFR in Brent in 2012 was 72, higher than both the national rate of 64.8 and the rate in Outer London of 71.8. There were 7,430 conceptions to all women in Brent in 2011, with 17 of these to women aged under 16. The conception rate for all women in Brent was 99 per 1,000 (again higher than both the national and London rates of 80.4 and 89.5 respectively). For women aged under 16, the conception rate in Brent was almost half (3.2 per 1000) the rate for England and Wales (6.1 per 1000).

Religion or belief

In addition to ethnic diversity, Brent has the highest proportion of active faith adherents in England, with over 80 per cent of residents having a religious belief. The largest religion followed in Brent is Christian at 41.5 per cent, however this has declined proportionally from 47.7 per cent in 2001. The number of Muslims has increased between 2001 and 2011, and Muslims now represent the second biggest religious group in Brent at 18.6 per cent of the population. The number of people of Muslim faith in the borough has now overtaken those who identify as Hindu, who currently make up 17.8 per cent of the borough's population.

Sexual orientation and gender identity

An issue in Brent is the low visibility of our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, as under-reporting continues to be a problem (coupled with there being no specific question on the Census). The LGBT charity Stonewall estimate that around six per cent of the population identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, although in London the figure is estimated to be more like ten per cent. This means that between 18,000 and 31,000 people in Brent can be expected to belong to the LGB community, with approximately one per cent of the population identifying as transgender if national estimates are correct.

Income

Between 2007 and 2010 Brent's position in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) declined, and the borough is now ranked as the 32nd most deprived in the country, from a position of 52nd in 2007 and 84th in 2002. Three of our wards now fall within the top ten per cent most deprived in the country, particularly in relation to measures of child poverty, lack of employment and poor housing conditions. The median household income in 2014 is £31,601, which makes Brent the 6th lowest borough in London for this indicator. There are huge differences in deprivation levels across the borough, with 30 per cent of households living on an annual income of £15,000 or less (including benefits) and in our most deprived wards, 50 per cent living on £15,000 or less.

Education and Employment

Adult skills levels are low with 44 per cent of the adult population having NVQ level one or below and five per cent with no formal qualifications. 28 per cent of Brent residents hold NVQ level 4 or above, compared to the London average of 42 per cent holding NVQ4 or above.

Up until April 2008, Brent had seen a steady increase in the number of people entering employment, reaching a high point of 72 per cent of the population in work. However, by September 2010 the recession had reduced the employed population to 64 per cent, with a significant proportion of job losses being in the service sectors and disproportionately affecting women. Our Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate is 5.9 per cent, and the current figures show 11.9 unemployed people per job centre registered vacancy. The increase in women's unemployment is higher and more women are now reporting themselves as economically inactive. The number of jobs per resident is low at 0.64 per resident, in comparison to London at 0.88.

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Equality Framework For Local Government (EFLG)

Excellent Level

Self - Assessment Template (2014 version)



Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) - Excellent level: making a difference

Knowing your communities

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place but needs improving
4. In place and effective

EFLG criteria		Rating (1-4)	Areas to consider in self assessment	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What difference has this made?
3.1	A comprehensive set of information about local communities/protected characteristics needs and outcomes is regularly updated and published and used to identify priorities for the local area.		The organisation has a sophisticated understanding of the difference between the equality profile of their local area and how that translates to inequalities for different groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent regularly publishes diversity profiles for the borough and for each ward on its website (see 3.1 Brent Diversity Profile 2014). These are shared and used across all departments to help staff understand the equality profile of the local area and take this into account when making decisions about service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff across all departments are able to use the comprehensive profiles to understand the communities in which they work. They use the profiles to inform equality analyses and the delivery of projects and policies which may impact upon certain groups differently.
			Changing needs are identified, prioritised and met across a wide range of services and outcomes by, for example, referring to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Measurement Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent has developed service user diversity profiles for departments across the council and the Equality Team has delivered workshops to Departmental Equality Groups on their use (see 3.1 Adult Social Care Diversity Profile) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has made a difference by equipping staff with an up to date evidence base of knowledge about the demographics of their service users, and providing them with the information needed to make decisions about the provision of accessible services which serve all client needs. The profiles are used to inform Equality Analyses and to drive positive outcomes for service users.

			<p>Data is updated and used to set priorities across the organisation and in different services, by geographical area and by protected characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Brent's equality profile is embedded within inductions, e-learning and ongoing staff training across the council (see 3.1 Corporate Induction Agenda). In addition the Diversity Profiles (see 3.1) are updated regularly and used by all service areas to help set priorities when business planning. • Equalities Key Performance Indicators are set and monitored across the council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are equipped with relevant, updated data which provides them with the information they need to set relevant priorities for their areas. • The reporting on progress against EKPIs mean that the organisation has access to regularly updated information to set equality priorities across all areas.
			<p>There is evidence of continuous improvement of the quality of the data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consulted on and revised diversity monitoring forms to improve collection of data on residents, service users and businesses in 2014 (See 3.1 Resident Diversity Monitoring Templates 2015). • We developed the Client Index database to improve the quality of our data. (See 3.1 Client Index and Single Customer Records Report) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will improve the quality of the data collected by making the process and collection standardised across the council. • The Client Index means that we can build a rounded picture of individual Brent residents, their attributes, their families and which services they access.
3.2	<p>Up to date and comprehensive equality data is used regularly to plan and assess impacts of decisions. Performance is monitored against equality objectives and</p>		<p>The achievement of outcomes is measured and there is evidence of gaps being narrowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent undertook a residents survey in 2014, which demonstrated improvements in residents attitudes to a number of areas, such as the council 'doing a good job for people like me' (See Residents' Attitude Survey case study and 3.2 Residents Attitude Survey 2014 Staff Briefing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of open workshops delivered on the Residents' Attitude survey, the knowledge of staff on the priorities and needs of their service users has increased and they are able to use this information in designing and delivering services.

	<p>outcomes including commissioned services, and with key health partners and other stakeholders.</p>				
			<p>Performance is measured and relevant equality objectives have been set and are regularly monitored.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation-wide and departmental equalities objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) have been set in line with the Brent Borough Plan and Equality Strategy. Progress against these KPIs is reviewed regularly by Departmental Equality Groups, Departmental Management Teams, the Diversity Reference Group and the Corporate Management Team. • Performance and progress is benchmarked on a bespoke version of 'inPhase' to monitor across KPIs and data reviewed regularly on a customisable dashboard. • We recently reviewed our Equality Strategy and Objectives along with our Policy to make sure that our commitment to equality runs through every council department, team and individual. An Equalities Action Plan was then developed and published for all staff to access. (See 3.2 Brent Equality Strategy 2015, 3.2 Brent Equality Policy 2015 and 3.2 Brent Equality Strategy Action Plan 2015-16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are able to easily benchmark their performance and compare progress across objectives both internally and with similar organisations. • Each member of staff has access to these new council-wide equality objectives. They inform all equality analyses which makes sure that there is a standardised approach which prioritises key equality objectives to every project, policy, strategy and decision. • The DEGs have made an important difference by making staff more responsible for understanding and analysing the equality impacts of their work. The structure has also improved the working relationship between the Equality Team and the wider staff teams, which is now more effective as a partnership.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each department has a Departmental Equality Group which reports regularly on their equality objectives, performance and action plans to a corporate equalities group (the Diversity Reference Group) (see 3.2 DEG update to DRG Example – Environments & Neighbourhoods March 2015) 	
			Equality outcomes for commissioned services are monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once a commissioned contract is in place we allocate a contract relationship officer who then visits the service on a quarterly basis to monitor outcomes. Progress against equality outcomes is integrated into this process in a number of ways, including consultation with service users, staff and analysis of documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By integrating equalities with the overall monitoring of outcomes we ensure that consideration is given to equality and diversity objectives in all processes that a service monitors, not just as a separate process or 'tick box' exercise. The information is then held on internal council systems and all data is used as part of any contract renewal process.
3.3	Partners are able to identify changes in community profiles, needs and outcomes and adjust equality priorities accordingly		The organisation is working with partners to ensure that changing needs are identified and met. Information is timely, relevant and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity profiles for residents and service users are published for partners to use, and we regularly review partners' approaches to equality (See 3.1 Brent Diversity Profile 2014) Following allocation of funding through the council's Regeneration and Growth department a recent set of investment plans have been established to facilitate development in the borough. As 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This means that staff, stakeholders and partners are able to access up to date, relevant information on their service users and residents and implement this into their work. It makes it simpler to conduct accurate equality analysis and monitor the changes in community needs. This has made a difference by providing opportunities for

			<p>part of these projects the council is working with a range of partners to make sure that any development involves residents, businesses and organisations and their needs (see 3.3 Wembley Calling Investment Plan 2015)</p>	<p>partners to be involved in investment and development and to make sure that their needs are met. For example in Wembley the council worked closely with the private sector, in Alperton the public sector through GLA and Transport for London. In Burnt Oak and Colindale the council worked closely with neighbouring boroughs and in Church End communities have been involved through initiatives such as the Coming Soon Club in partnership with Meanwhile Space which will help new cultural and business initiatives test ideas and actively participate in change while it happens.</p>
		<p>Voluntary and community sector partners/health colleagues and stakeholders can access and use the information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All service user and resident diversity monitoring information is publicly available on the Brent data website, in accessible, 'infographic' style format. (See https://intelligence.brent.gov.uk/Pages/Diversity.aspx) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has made a difference to the ease of identifying community changes and need. For example we recently worked with the newly commissioned domestic violence service to ensure their referral forms were standardised in line with equality priorities and to make sure that they had access to the most recent profile of the borough and service users.
		<p>Data, including information about</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports such as the Brent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A public profile of health inequality and wider equality

			<p>health inequality, is developed and shared/ promoted across the organisation and with partners.</p>	<p>health and wellbeing are available and used by partners across the borough. Key information, including about health inequality, is published from specific meetings such as the Health and Wellbeing Board's work on recommendations about partnership arrangements between Brent council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (see http://brent.gov.uk/your-council/partnerships/health-and-wellbeing-board/jsna/)</p>	<p>priorities means that partners and staff are able to access relevant information to inform their decision making in this area. Publishing all meeting minutes and recommendations/action plans means that the council's work towards tackling inequalities is held accountable and monitored.</p>
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Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place but needs improving
4. In place and effective

EFLG criteria		Rating (1-4)	Areas to consider in self assessment	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What difference has this made?
3.4	<p>The organisation is able to show how they have made sure that even when making difficult decisions they continue to have clearly articulated and meaningful commitment to equality. Leaders have gained a reputation within the community and with all of its partners for championing equality, balancing competing interests and fostering good relations.</p>		<p>Senior leaders own and demonstrate clear knowledge of local equality priorities and how and why they are being addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent has a strategic level equalities group chaired by the Chief Executive to provide Leadership on equality and diversity. The group sets milestones and analyses the reports and action plans of each Departmental Equality Group (see 3.4 Diversity Reference Group Terms of Reference 2015) • The membership at Brent is extremely diverse and representative of the community. There is a lead member for Equality, Cllr Pavey, and the Leader of the Council is regularly involved in the delivery of a range of Equality events (see 3.4 Diversity of Brent Councillors Report July 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This demonstrates that the council takes its equality priorities and achievement of its objectives very seriously. The commitment of corporate and senior management to equality and diversity provides a clear message to all staff that equality is a key priority at all levels of the council. The Chief Executive regularly blogs about equalities actions and achievements and makes sure that these are embedded in all of the council's work. • Having a diverse and committed leadership demonstrates that equality is implemented across all levels of the council's work, including in strategic decision making. Having a lead member for equalities means that all work on equality and diversity is held accountable at a high level and reviewed by senior members.

			Senior leaders act as ambassadors for the equality agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The political leadership at Brent are committed to equality and diversity and embedded this throughout their 2015-19 Borough Plan (see 3.4 Brent Borough Plan 2015-19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This means that the 2015-19 Borough Plan explicitly states the council priorities on diversity, fairness and tackling inequality. It demonstrates to residents, service users, staff and partners that the council is committed to the equality agenda and that it will be embedded into all work in the future.
			Senior leaders personally challenge inequalities and drive an improvement agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, the Deputy Leader of the Council undertook a review of the council's HR and equalities policies and procedures. As a result, various recommendations were made and an action plan put in place (see 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Review January 2015 and 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Action Plan 2015) The council set up a Commission on Social Mobility following the concern of the administration that the benefits of economic growth within Brent had not been experienced equally by all parts of the community (see 3.4 Social Mobility Commission Report 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review by Cllr Pavey meant that areas requiring more action to ensure equality and diversity were highlighted. Its impact included enabling a strategic action plan to be developed in response. The recommendations demonstrated Cllr Pavey's personal commitment to challenging inequality within the council's workforce, and the review has provided the basis for further work towards achieving diversity especially at senior management level. The Social Mobility Commission made a difference by recommending actions to increase the equality of benefits to Brent residents as a result of economic recovery.
3.5	The organisation can		Staff, the community or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A refreshed Joint Strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The refreshed assessment,

	<p>demonstrate success in working with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to address equality priorities, which are reviewed on a regular basis. Decision makers in the organisation are active in driving the equality agenda forward.</p>		<p>the voluntary and community sector can give good examples of improved outcomes/ reduced inequality/ improvements in health inequality.</p>	<p>Needs Assessment (JSNA) was published in December 2014 with attached information sheets to enhance understanding of the equality characteristics of Brent residents and the varying needs around health inequality and local service delivery. For example a refreshed comprehensive information sheet was produced on Learning Disability in the borough (see 3.5 Brent JSNA December 2014 and 3.5 Learning Disability JSNA Refresh 2014)</p>	<p>along with information sheets has made the information around health equality priorities easily accessible and available to all staff and partners.</p>
			<p>Review mechanisms are in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds the Cabinet publicly to account by reviewing and scrutinising the impact of policy decisions on the borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scrutiny and overview functions have the capacity to give non-executive members a significant opportunity to influence the proposals of the Cabinet and to probe into the impact of their decisions.
			<p>Cross-organisational learning is taking place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A programme to help raise awareness of diabetes in Brent has trained 11 Community Champions to continue to raise awareness in the borough (see 3.5 Diabetes Champions Press Release) Events around health and wellbeing regularly take place to raise awareness. For example the Brent Multi-Faith Forum ran a training day in February on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach to health and equality issues in the borough makes sure that staff are kept up to date and are actively involved in work to tackle health inequality and understanding. The use of community ‘champions’ has raised the profile of the work towards health and equality in the borough. The project’s coverage in local press demonstrates the impact of

				Dementia in association with Ashford Place (see 3.5 BMFF Dementia and our Faith Communities event)	<p>this work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for community organisations and service users forums to be involved in work around equality and diversity issues. The Multi Faith Forum, with assistance from Brent Council, took the lead on this event to deliver information and learning on health inequalities which faith communities may experience.
3.6	The organisation can demonstrate a clear link between meeting their equality objectives and positive outcomes for its communities.		There is evidence of improved outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents Attitude Survey 2014 showed an improvement in residents' perceptions on a range of topics in Brent, including an improvement in the number of residents who are satisfied with the way Brent Council runs things (see 3.6 Residents Attitude Survey Results 2014) The Equality Objectives have been refreshed in the new Equality Strategy to reflect a more outcome-focused way of working towards our objectives (see revised equality objectives in 3.2 Brent Equality Strategy April 2015) The Equality Team was reviewed in 2014 and re-established to have a greater partnership role, to be more outward focus and to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents' Attitude Survey provided the most comprehensive overview of residents' views since the previous survey in 2009. The Research and Intelligence Team delivered a series of four workshops to increase the knowledge of staff members about the views and satisfaction of their residents. It has provided a large base of information which can now be used to inform decision making across all council service areas. The new Equality Objectives will make a difference to the way in which the council approaches and works towards its equality and diversity priorities. By setting more outcome-focused

				<p>work more directly with partners and departments (see 3.6 Equality Team Workplan)</p>	<p>objectives, this will make sure that objectives are measured and implemented into all of the council's work, and are not perceived as separate to the wider aims of the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The restructuring of the Equality Team has had the effect of increasing the responsibility of Department Equality Groups, making the work of the Equality Team more efficient and outward-facing. This has made a difference to the work of the team, which is now able to provide consistent and ongoing advice to all council departments about the equality impacts of their work.
			<p>Actions to achieve priority outcomes are reviewed and regularly updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Departmental Equality Groups update quarterly to the corporate Diversity Reference Group on their actions and equality outcomes (see 3.6 DRG Minutes January 2015 and 3.6 DRG Action Log January 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Departmental Equality Groups (DEGs) take seriously their responsibility in regards to their departments work on equality and diversity. Their work is accountable and assessed regularly by the corporate Diversity Reference Group (DRG) which demonstrates the commitment to the achievement of equality objectives by senior leaders in the council.
			<p>Steps are taken if deficiencies are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from the DRG is then incorporated into the action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each DEG has its equalities action plan reviewed by

		identified.	<p>for each Departmental Equality Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a deficiency identified in the disproportionate exclusion rates for black boys in Brent. This has resulted in a project being started in partnership with the Equality Team and Children & Young People's Department to tackle this. • An award winning Flexible Childcare Scheme has been implemented in Brent to help people who work irregular hours, weekends or overnight, at short notice. The scheme addresses a deficiency in childcare at irregular hours in the borough (see Flexible Childcare Case Study) 	<p>members of the corporate DRG. If gaps or deficiencies are identified recommendations will be discussed, chaired by the Chief Executive, to set objectives and monitor outcomes of departments' work and equality priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flexible Childcare scheme has made a difference in the provision of short notice, flexible care for children in the borough, meaning that parents can attend work, appointments and other engagements more easily. The pool is made up of a network of childminders who specifically provide childcare at short notice or outside of 'normal' office hours. In 2015 the scheme won the award for 'Innovation' at the Local Government Chronicle Awards.
		Stakeholders and staff are involved in the monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and progress is processed through quarterly monitoring carried out on Equality KPIs by the Corporate Performance Team. In addition, all progress on equality objectives are reported quarterly by each Departmental Equality Group to the corporate Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that staff across a range of levels within the council are responsible for equality monitoring. The development of the DEGs has made a difference to the way each service area is accountable for their decisions and impact on equality.

				Reference Group (see 3.2 DEG Update to DRG Example – Environments & Neighbourhoods)	
3.7	The organisation uses the scrutiny process as a driver for change. The organisation benchmarks its achievements against comparable others and shares its experience in developing good practice.		The organisation assesses its performance and outcomes against comparable organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides cross-council data on a quarterly basis which is then used to populate a comparative data dashboard coordinated by London Councils. This information is then collated by Performance Officers who share the comparative statistics across the organisation so that it can be used for benchmarking and outcomes-setting purposes (see Comparative Organisations LAPS Benchmarking Dashboard 2014-15 Q2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information provided by this dashboard informs the council's priorities by highlighting areas where comparative performance is not as high as other areas. This then informs decision-making about services which are not delivering highly on their performance indicators, and makes sure that departments are accountable for this.
			Review mechanisms are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises specific projects and programmes as well as general progress against internal performance indicators and comparable organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By reviewing the progress of the council regularly, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee means that good practice is highlighted and any gaps or issues are identified quickly and actions put in place to resolve these. The Committee has recently reviewed progress on the number of people being placed in temporary accommodation, the completion of mental health assessments in Adult Social Care and the impact of council tax collection.

			<p>Outcomes and priorities have changed as a result of Scrutiny review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Scrutiny Reviews take place on a regular basis. A recent Scrutiny Review of Brent's progress on tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) resulted in the creation of an Action Plan with cross-council implementation (see 3.7 VAWG Scrutiny Report Action Plan 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VAWG Scrutiny Task Committee and subsequent action plan have resulted in a number of changes including: development of FGM resources leaflets in partnership with Brent CCG and GP practices, capturing of more information through risk assessment and referral forms for victims of VAWG through a newly commissioned IDVA service in Brent and the extension of the scope of the Safer Brent VAWG Strategy to address FGM, 'honour-based' violence and forced marriage.
			<p>The organisation is approached on a regular basis to provide examples of, or showcase good practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has recently been featured in local and national press for its innovative work around flexible childcare and subsequent awards won (see Flexible Childcare Case Study) • The council has also received recognition for being the first council in the country to offer discounted business rates as an incentive to employers in the borough paying the London Living Wage to employees. This led to Greenwich council approaching Brent and incorporating a similar scheme in the Royal Greenwich borough (see 3.7 Press Coverage for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent's success in local and national press demonstrates to service users and residents that there are innovative, award-winning ideas behind the council's decisions. It provides a basis on which the council can attract partners, stakeholders and service users, and demonstrates that our commitment to equality issues is at the forefront of decision making.

				<p>Living Wage Incentive 2014-15, 3.7 Living Wage Internal Communications and 3.7 London Living Wage Guidance for Business Rates Discount)</p>	
3.8	<p>Through effective and consistent communications the organisation has gained a reputation within the community and with all partners for championing and improving equality outcomes, balancing competing interests and fostering good relations</p>		<p>Staff, the community or the voluntary and community sector can give good examples of how effective communication has enabled the organisation to prevent or manage tensions between different equality groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent's work under the Prevent Strategy involves regular effective communication between a range of groups through the Prevent Advisory Forum. The forum is chaired by a Councillor and attended by council staff, voluntary groups, community groups, youth workers and multi-faith group representatives (see 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum TOR, 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum Agenda and 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum Minutes January 2015)) • The council's LGBT youth project, Mosaic, recently acted upon a range of communication which had taken place around the lack of LGBT book and resources provision in the borough's libraries. A partnership project was set up between Mosaic and Brent Library Services and a group of LGBT young people participated in a stock selection exercise which is currently on tour around libraries in Brent (see Mosaic & Library LGBT Stock Selection) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that the council has a consistent dialogue with community groups, residents and service users, in an area in which effective partnership is crucial to making sure that tensions are managed and reduced effectively. • The project between Mosaic and Brent Libraries Services strengthened the relationship between LGBT teenagers in the borough and the council, and demonstrated that the council is keen to have the input of young people from a range of protected groups in the borough to make sure that services are delivered fairly and equally.

				Case Study)	
			The organisation has a role in ensuring that all stakeholders collectively manage the conflicting needs of their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent facilitates and attends the meetings of the active Brent Multi-Faith Forum in the borough. For example the council has recently attended to present on VAWG in the borough and to discuss how we can increase electoral registration from faith communities (see 3.8 Brent Multi Faith Forum TOR, 3.8 Brent Multi Faith Forum Minutes July 2014 and 3.8 Brent Multi Faith Forum Electoral Registration Presentation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council maintains a relationship with the Brent Multi Faith Forum whilst making sure that the group is independent and is given a range of opportunities to discuss and contribute to decision making in the borough. It demonstrates that the council values the input of various communities, whilst facilitating discussions between groups with potentially conflicting needs.
			There is evidence that priorities are negotiated and changed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's service user Disability Forum was re-established after a brief hiatus following discussion with attendees at the Brent Council & Brent Housing Partnership event to celebrate International Day for Disabled People (see 3.8 Disability Forum Meeting Agenda March 2015 and 3.8 Disability Forum Meeting Minutes March 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The re-establishment of the Disability Forum means that disabled residents are provided with opportunities to feed back directly to Members and staff at Brent Council. Community and voluntary sector organisations also attend on behalf of their service users and members and provide a method in which the council can provide updates and listen to the views of a range of disabled service users.
3.9	The organisation can demonstrate that		There is evidence that provision is being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our approach to equalities in procurement is outlines in our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council spends £280m each year buying goods, works or

<p>commissioned/procured services are helping it achieve its equality priorities.</p>			<p>monitored using quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the results considered and analysed by both supplier and client.</p>	<p>robust Procurement and Equalities Guidance. The guidance equips staff with the knowledge and confidence to advance equality, diversity and inclusion through their work on procurement (see 3.9 Procurement and Equalities Guidance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Equality Groups report directly to the corporate Diversity Monitoring group on their equality priorities in commissioning and procurement of services. • In January 2015 a revised set of resident diversity monitoring templates were launched to standardise the collection of information across the council and its residents, suppliers and clients. (see 3.1 Resident Diversity Monitoring Templates 2015) 	<p>services from other organisations. We recognise that this purchasing power can be used as a way to advance equality and wider social benefits such as creating training and employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new monitoring templates mean that departments are now able to capture a standard range of information that can be used to analyse the potential impact of decisions on residents and service users. The new templates have been redesigned with comprehensive guidance and communications to help all staff members to use them consistently and effectively. • Our Procurement and Equalities Guidance
				<p>There is evidence of providers meeting the organisation's equality objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One area in which we have worked closely with providers to ensure equality objectives are met is in Community Safety, specifically violence against

				<p>women and girls (VAWG). In light of the increasing diversity and population increase of the borough we worked with local VAWG service providers to make sure they were collecting useful data in order to deliver effective services and meet our equality objectives.</p>	<p>worked with service providers to enhance their equality monitoring system and to make sure data on all groups was captured accurately. This resulted in production of domestic violence leaflets in Polish, and an expansion of the 'White Other' category in equalities data monitoring collected by services to more accurately capture the profile of perpetrators of violence in the borough.</p>
			<p>Providers understand and can articulate a commitment to equality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council works in close partnership with Brent Housing Partnership ('BHP'), which leads on provision and maintenance of housing stock within the borough. The Equality Team have worked closely with BHP to develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, including undertaking staff consultation (see BHP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2015-17) • Hestia, the new provider of domestic violence services in the borough, sought to expand upon their understanding of equality priorities in the borough. The Equality Team recently assisted in making sure their collection of equality information and use of Brent diversity profiles was 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that Brent's commitment to equality and diversity is prioritised throughout not just council work but also through the work of partners and providers. It demonstrates to service users that we work closely with providers to make sure equality and fairness are prioritised through all decisions. The BHP Strategy standardises the approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and staff consultation on the strategy increases the knowledge of all staff working within and in partnership with BHP as well as gives them the opportunity to contribute to the strategy and its implementation.

				<p>effective and useful in tailoring their service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Hestia gave the council the opportunity to make sure that equality and diversity priorities were understood and consistently acted upon by a new provider in the borough. The service now regularly uses the Brent diversity profiles to enhance their understanding of their changing service user needs. For example they have increased their data collection on perpetrators of domestic violence by expanding the categories in which information was collected (e.g. by expanding the list of ethnicities that were previously reported upon).
3.10	<p>The organisation takes a sophisticated approach to fostering good relations which has resulted in measurable improvements in relationships between diverse communities</p>		<p>There is information available to show there has been an improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents Attitude Survey results were published in February 2015. They demonstrated an increase in the number of residents who agreed with the statement 'Brent is a place where people from different groups get along.' 84 per cent of residents either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement. This can be compared to 2009, when 74 per cent of residents strongly agreed or tended to agree, and 72% in 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2015 survey provides an extremely useful overview of residents' opinions on a variety of topics. Measurable improvements across a range of areas were reported. This provides evidence to demonstrate the positive impact of the council's work, and also provides staff with updated knowledge about their service users' and residents' views on community issues.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents Attitude Survey results also demonstrated an improvement in residents' views on a number of community issues such as anti-social behaviour and feeling safe outside after dark (see 3.6 Residents Attitude Survey Results 2014) 	
			<p>The organisation has been asked to work with others to improve performance on fostering good relations between diverse communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Prevent Advisory Forum members represent an extremely diverse range of communities and groups within Brent. Among others, the Brent Multi-Faith Forum is represented and the council facilitates the meetings to work together with community groups to discuss and tackle radicalisation and extremism in the borough. The forum was asked to develop a youth outreach event coordinated by the Al-Saddiiq Foundation, a community organisation in the borough. (see 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum Minutes January 2015 and 3.10 Youth Outreach Event Poster Al-Saddiiq 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has a lead role in the fostering of good relations between diverse communities, especially given that Brent is the second most ethnically diverse borough in London. The council facilitates and contributes to a range of partnership and engagement-based initiatives to increase community engagement and break barriers such as the Disability Forum, the Prevent Advisory Forum and the Brent Multi Faith Forum.

Involving your communities

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place but needs improving
4. In place and effective

EFLG criteria		Rating (1-4)	Areas to consider in self assessment	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What difference has this made?
3.11	There are a range of sophisticated engagement structures that result in both formal and informal interactions between the organisation and its diverse communities.		There are a range of innovative approaches to involving communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent Councillors meet as a full cabinet once a month. These meetings are held in a variety of locations across Brent, for example the Pakistani Community Centre and Patidar House (see: 3.11 Brent Cabinet Meeting Agenda Pakistan Community Centre Jan 2015) • The Borough Plan 2015-19 underwent a particularly rigorous consultation process to inform its development. The council consulted with residents through a range of mechanisms including face to face interviews, service user forums and 'question time' type events (see Borough Plan Consultation Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leadership holds meetings in a range of community locations to make sure that the council is a visible presence and that residents can easily and effectively engage with work which affects them. • Using a range of consultation methods (including online, face to face interviews, telephone interviews, forums and surveys) meant that a more collaborative approach to engagement could be carried out. It meant that a much larger base of residents were consulted on this important piece of work, with over 2,000 residents taking part in the face to face interviews alone.

			<p>Arrangements are made to meet specific or individual needs. Vulnerable people/ communities participate and their satisfaction levels are at least as high the average.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a range of forums within Brent which create joint working between Councillors, council staff, service users, residents and community groups. For example there are active Disability Forums for both council services and Brent Housing Partnership, and there is an active Multi-Faith Forum in the borough, along with the area-based Brent Connects Forums (see: 3.11 Brent Connects Forums List 2014-15 and 3.11 Brent Connects Terms of Reference) • The B-Heard group are increasingly engaged in council activities through their engagement and scrutiny of Adult Social Care services. In addition, the Learning Disability Partnership Board are increasingly involved in procurement and commissioning decision-making (see: BHeard User Group Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These Forums provide invaluable feedback and consultation on council services. Senior members of staff in the council will often attend to present on a range of issues, for example the Strategic Director of Adults Social Care recently attended the Disability Forum to present on the Care Act and its implementation. This means that vulnerable communities with complex needs are kept informed and given opportunities to engage and be consulted about council services and decisions. • These groups mean that service users with complex needs and from vulnerable groups are able to participate and contribute to services which directly affects them. It makes a difference by adding an extra layer of accountability and scrutiny to service procurement and delivery.
			<p>There is evidence of continuous improvement in community involvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council is encouraging more residents to participate in online consultation methods. There has been a large increase in residents and service users engaging with online consultation methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2012 the number of visits to the online community engagement pages on the Brent website has increased by almost 2,500 visits. • This has had an impact upon

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key priority in the Borough Plan 2015-19 is to engage in a more collaborative approach to service delivery, engaging with the skills of the 44% of residents who said in the Residents' Survey that they would be prepared to help run a local service rather than see it reduced or cut. • Innovative methods of involving communities have also increased the number of people involved in participation in consultation and engagement exercises. For example, consultation on the Brent Borough Plan 2015-19 involved a variety of consultation methods which resulted in around 3,000 residents and service users being involved (see Borough Plan Consultation Case Study) 	<p>the Borough Plan by making sure that a collaborative approach to service delivery is embedded throughout the whole plan. The council has committed to working with partners to find new ways of providing services, including collaborative commissioning and developing shared services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of methods used in the consultation around the Borough Plan means that the council was able to engage with thousands of residents and gather useful, up to date information and an accurate picture of communities' needs and priorities. These have then been implemented into the Borough Plan and communicated widely to residents to demonstrate the impact that their opinions can have on council services.
			<p>Mainstream engagement mechanisms are increasingly involving previously under-represented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increasingly diverse range of participants engaging with Brent's established engagement groups, for example the Brent Citizen's Panel. In 2015, 54 per cent of residents involved in the Citizen's Panel comprised identified as BAME. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that groups who have been historically under-represented are

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on participants in mainstream engagement mechanisms, when disaggregated, increasingly demonstrates that the profile of residents and service users represents the diverse and changing population of Brent (see Residents' Attitude Survey Case Study) • A project to engage with the increasing Somali community in the borough was carried out in 2014. The aim was to include the Somali community in discussions about fostering and adoption, as this group is historically under-represented (see Somali Community Engagement Event Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach, by providing general information about a generic service in a targeted way, has made a difference to the perceptions of both council officers and the Somali community. There has been an improvement in communication between community leaders and Brent's Children's Social Care team and the establishment of these links is leading to further dissemination of information and an increase in expressions of interest of fostering in Brent.
3.12	Communities from across the protected groups are actively participating in and influencing decision making.		Communities are encouraged or supported to influence or make decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B-Heard is a representative group of service users who use Adult Social Care services. The group is involved at every stage of the commissioning process. They evaluate tenders and contracts and undertake quality monitoring visits (see BHeard User Group Case Study) • In addition, the council has disability forums both for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The B-Heard service user and carer group has made a difference in a range of adult social care services. For example in 2014 the group worked with the adult social care team to develop a set of Public Standards. These standards build on Brent's Customer Promise and are linked to a learning and development programme so

				<p>residents and for service users of Brent Housing Partnership (BHP). These are advisory forums in which residents have the opportunity to ask questions and contribute to decision-making and service delivery. They are chaired by a Councillor and facilitated by council staff (see: BHP Disability Forum Case Study)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Access Programme is a large scale transformation programme that has significant implications for residents and other stakeholders. It implements the Community Access Strategy and aims to enable our residents to become self sufficient in their interactions with Brent. A face to face survey was undertaken and a further survey to understand how existing customers felt about the proposed changes. The council then undertook focus groups which gave residents the opportunity to influence decisions (see Community Access Programme Case Study) 	<p>people know what they can expect from Adult Social Care and their allocated worker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Disability Forums for Brent and for Brent Housing Partnership play a key role in informing and consulting residents and service users across all groups. Attendees are supported and encouraged to contribute by a range of facilitators and gain further understanding about the council's work. The approach to the Community Access Programme and Strategy made a difference by providing information to council officers, in addition to existing data, about how residents needs and attitudes would be impacted by the programme. This analysis fed into the equality analysis for the Community Access Strategy to make sure that any changes will enhance and improve access.
			<p>Staff and stakeholders are able to describe levels of influence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B-Heard is an example of an established service user and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B-Heard have made differences in a range of areas by having a high level of

			<p>within the community and changes made as a result.</p>	<p>carer group who have influenced key decisions and service changes or developments within adult social care. They sit on interview panels for a range of directly provided services and lead peer interviewing exercises to evaluate the impact of processes such as the Safeguarding Adults Process in Brent (see 3.12 ASC Annual Report 2013-14)</p>	<p>influence within the community. For example they played a key part in procurement evaluations in 2013-14 for a variety of contracts including the West London Alliance Home Care contract and an Advocacy Service contract which all adult social care users now access.</p>
			<p>Key decision makers are involved in the engagement process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's leadership are regularly involved in community engagement. For example each service user forum is chaired by a Councillor and senior management regularly attend to present on various issues affecting residents (see 3.8 Disability Forum Meeting Agenda and Minutes March 2015). • Engagement with community groups on specific issues are also chaired by the council's leadership. For example the Prevent Advisory Forum is chaired by Cllr Deneslow and attended by Cllr Carr (see 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum Agenda and 3.8 Prevent Advisory Forum Minutes January 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors taking leadership and participating in various forums demonstrates to residents and service users the impact that their input and views has upon high level decision making. It demonstrates that the council takes equality issues seriously and that consultation responses are fed into decisions event at the most strategic levels. • Question Time panel events are highly attended by staff at Brent Council and give employees the opportunity to engage with key decision makers such as the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The Chief Executive also blogs regularly about

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are quarterly 'Question Time' events as part of ongoing consultation, chaired by an independent official with the panel comprising senior leadership, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council (see 3.12 Chief Executive Invite to Question Time January 2015) 	<p>equality and diversity issues and chairs the corporate Diversity Reference Group. This has raised the profile of the equality agenda at Brent and makes sure that all staff are informed and able to engage with the process.</p>
			<p>Evidence is available that shows the organisation is able to be decisive and confident about difficult decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust equality analysis and thorough consultation informs the council when making difficult decisions. An example of this is the 2014 Libraries Transformation Project which was a result of proposed budget reductions. (see 3.12 Libraries Transformation EA) • Budget proposals as a result of funding reductions also meant the council was faced with a range of difficult decisions in 2014 to inform spending for 2014-15. The council undertook various consultation methods on the budget proposals and involved residents and service users at each stage of the decision-making process (see Budget Consultation 2014-15 Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thorough equality analysis (EA) system has made a difference in making sure that difficult or challenging decisions are made on the basis of up to date, robust equality and diversity data to accurately assess any potential impacts upon protected groups. • The budget consultation contributed to already emerging picture on the service areas which matter to local people. The views expressed during consultation had a direct impact on decision making processes and a number of services were saved including services for vulnerable groups.
3.13	The organisation works to drive improvement in		<p>There is evidence of partnership arrangements leading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing of the Voluntary Sector Forum has moved from being council-led to voluntary sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has made a difference by enabling the council to utilise a wider range of partners and

	involvement across all partnerships.		to improved outcomes in participation.	led.	co-chair the Forum with the CEO of the Brent CVS organisation. A range of skills and contacts are able to be used in the forum to make sure that knowledge and results are being shared extensively with partners and stakeholders, and improving the attendance levels at forum meetings.
			Partners are open to challenge and constructive criticism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a report produced in partnership with the council and the Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which included recommendations around closer partnership work (see 3.13 Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting Minutes Feb 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CCG report was discussed at the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board meeting in January 2014, where an action plan was developed to increase partnership work between the CCG and Brent Council, especially around consultation. This will make a difference to the way in which the council is able to work collaboratively across all services including health.
3.14	There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in public life. Organisations can demonstrate real improvement rather than just describing their work.		Improvements have been achieved and more people from under-represented groups are participating across a wider range of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following consultation with Somali community groups, there has been a notable increase in the engagement of Somali communities with services such as adoption and fostering and other council services (see Somali Community Engagement Event Case Study) The Disability Forum has been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 people attended an event aimed to increase participation in fostering in the Somali community. Both staff and community representatives expressed a greater understanding of the fostering process and the Children's Social Care team received an increase in expressions of interest as a result.

The organisation can demonstrate that people across a range of protected characteristics are able to influence decision making.

re-established in 2014, and there is an established, well-attended Brent Housing Partnership Disability Forum representing disabled service users of BHP. Recent meetings saw a large number of disabled residents and carers in attendance to receive information and contribute their views on decisions and council proposals (see **3.8 Disability Forum Minutes**).

- There was an increase in the number of attendees at a range of equality events as part of the 'Break Barriers; Open Doors' series organised by the Equality Team. This includes events celebrating Black History Month, International Women's Day and International Day for Disabled People along with a staff event to mark LGBT History Month (see **3.14 BBOD Events Timetable 2015-16**)
- The B-Heard group are increasingly engaged in council activities through their engagement and scrutiny of Adult Social Care services. In addition, the Learning Disability Partnership Board are increasingly involved in

- In reconvening the Disability Forum the council has provided further opportunity for under-represented groups, including vulnerable service users and their carers, to participate in council activities. The most recent meeting, in March 2015, reported high attendance and excellent feedback from attendees.
- Council events make it possible for service users, staff, residents and local organisations to engage with the council and see the commitment to equality and diversity in action. They provide a range of activities, discussion opportunities, stalls and celebratory events, at which hundreds of people attend.

				<p>procurement and commissioning decision-making. The Board has a Health Sub-Group which monitors the delivery of the Health Action Plan (see BHeard User Group Case Study)</p>	
		<p>Decision makers are from a wider range of backgrounds.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leadership of Brent Council is amongst one of the diverse in the country (see 3.4 Diversity of Councillors report 2014) • The senior management of the council is the 5th most diverse in London. Despite this, the council is implementing various initiatives to increase the diversity of senior management in the council, especially in relation to increasing women and people identifying as BAME in the senior workforce. (see 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Review January 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of Brent Council are representative of the communities in which they serve. This makes a difference to all community groups by demonstrating that councillors understand their needs and are take seriously their responsibilities of fairness and equality, for example through their commitments in the Brent Borough Plan. • Where gaps are identified, such as the lower diversity at senior management level, councillors have personally committed to increase the diversity in this area through an independent review and action plan. The council has joined Race For Opportunity and is working towards the recommendations highlighted by Cllr Pavey in his report into HR and Equality. This includes the development of mentoring and leadership programmes to tackle the lack of diversity at senior

					management
			People feel satisfied that they have been listened to/involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As well as increased participation across the range of consultation methods, the council also reported a reduction in complaints across a wide range of areas, including reductions in complaints about children's services and adult social care. In addition the percentage of first stage complaints responded to within the set timescales improved across most areas of the council (see Complaints Annual Report 2013-14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to and resolving complaints efficiently and at the first stage makes a difference to service users' experiences of the council, and makes sure that where inefficiencies or issues have been identified that these gaps can be tackled immediately.
			The organisation is influencing wider-representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council continues to be involved with the facilitation of the Brent Multi-Faith Forum and more specific advisory forums with community groups such as the Prevent Advisory Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has led to actions to increase wider representation, for example by moving the chair of the Voluntary Sector Forum from being council-led to led independently by the voluntary sector. This enables the council to reach a wider base of service users and residents by utilising partnership arrangements and benefitting from shared knowledge and practice across the voluntary sector.

Responsive services and customer care

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place but needs improving
4. In place and effective

EFLG criteria		Rating (1-4)	Areas to consider in self assessment	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What difference has this made?
3.15	The organisation can demonstrate that improvements in equality outcomes are being delivered as a result of effective equality analysis/ impact assessment, and can demonstrate how negative impacts have been mitigated.		The organisation can demonstrate how equality analysis/ impact assessment has been used to identify needs and improve outcomes/ reduce inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions on a large amount of budget proposals were undertaken by Cabinet in 2015. To inform this process the Equality Team implemented a new Equality Analysis (EA) system into the council (see Equality Analysis System Review Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the new EA system means that EAs are not perceived to be a 'box-ticking' exercise but instead are fully understood and based upon accurate, up to date data. For the 2014-15 budget proposals, the new EA system was used to identify a range of needs of different groups. These EAs then informed the decision-making process to make sure that all factors and needs were taken into account and that wherever possible, proposals improved the outcomes for vulnerable people and reduced inequality within communities
			The organisation can provide evidence of how or where equality analysis/ impact assessment has informed decision-making and facilitated different, tailored services that have improved outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new equality analysis online system has made it possible for business planning to more thoroughly incorporate equality analysis – EAs are now planned for the year in advance and discussed at each Departmental Equality Group meeting as well as in the corporate Diversity Reference Group (see 3.15 Environments & Neighbourhoods Workshop on EAs for SMT Feb 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach has made a difference to decision making across all council departments. It means that Department Equality Groups take more responsibility for analysing the impact of decisions. For example the DEG for Environment and Neighbourhoods have used their acquired knowledge about the EA process to deliver a workshop to Senior Management to expand

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use an EA tracking document which is maintained by the Equality Team to demonstrate the overarching impact of decisions proposed and made by the council. As of May 2015 this process has been developed to be automatic, through the reporting mechanism of the newly implemented online EA system (3.15 EA Tracking Document March 2015) Equality analysis particularly informed the decision making on the wide range budget proposals in 2014. Full EAs on both service delivery and staffing impact were undertaken on all projects and changes where an impact was predicted. Rejections of proposals which would have a disproportionate impact upon vulnerable groups were seen in areas such as Adults Social Care and Community Safety. The Head of Equality compiled an overview of the impacts of the budget proposals and this was presented to the corporate Diversity (see 3.15 Cumulative Equality Impact of Budget Proposals – Section 7 onwards) 	<p>upon their knowledge of equality and diversity issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EA tracking document has made a difference to the way that the overarching impacts of all council decisions are collated and used to inform wider decision making. The information on all potential impacts is now compiled regularly and efficiently and the Equality Team is working with the online EA system developers to embed this process into reporting on the online EA system itself. This has made a difference by making sure that corporate management have access to an accurate, overarching report into the impacts of all budget proposals. It streamlines the EA process by using a new, accessible online system and has increased the knowledge of staff about the equality and diversity implications of their decisions.
3.16	<p>The organisation can demonstrate that improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered across the</p>		<p>It is clear who the service users are.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, updated resident diversity profiles are produced and published on the publicly accessible 'Brent Data' website. These are broken down by geographically by ward (see 3.1 Brent Diversity Profile 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity profiles have made a difference to the accessibility and user-friendliness of equality and diversity data for all residents of Brent. They provide information on ward-based demographics as well as a Brent-

	<p>business.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the geographic resident diversity profiles, service user profiles for each service area in the council are being developed to provide information to departments about who exactly is and is not using their service (see 3.1 Adult Social Care Service User Diversity Profile) 	<p>wide profile, and narrative outlines any gaps or challenges that the council faces around equality and diversity.</p>
			<p>Gaps have been identified in terms of who may not be using the service and why.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been specific gaps identified as a result of research and the creation of service user profiles, as well as analysis of the characteristics of respondents interviewed for the Residents Attitude Survey. Following changes in legislation around electoral registration, the council identified that many people in the borough who previously registered as a household may need further information and encouragement to vote in the next election (see Electoral Registration Project Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has made a difference by providing information which has then been developed into action plans around gaps identified. For example there was a lack of engagement by the Somali Community across council services, and a gap identified in sporting services where there was a low number of women and girls involvement. Both of these were then tackled by comprehensive service developments (see Engaging Women & Girls in Sport Case Study and Somali Community Engagement Event Case Study) The electoral registration project to increase voter registration across the borough has made a difference by creating a net increase of 1391 registered voters as of March 2015. It also raised the profile of the democratic process and increased the diversity of the

					<p>pool of potential voters through engaging with events such as the 'Lets Engage to Change' event facilitated by the Brent Multi Faith Forum and the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum in February 2015 (see Engage to Change Electoral registration Event Flyer 2015)</p>
			<p>Action has been taken to change services in response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of identifying a gap in the use of services by Somali communities, a project was delivered by the Children and Young People's department to inform the Somali community particularly about adoption and fostering in the borough with the aim of increasing participation in this area (see Somali Community Engagement Case Study) The Voter Registration Project is a large project delivered with the aim of increasing electoral registration and voting, especially in underrepresented groups (see Electoral Registration Project Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This made a difference in changing the service to open lines of communication with the Somali community about what fostering is and to demonstrate an openness to engage with the Somali community, some of whom disclosed that they felt mistrust of the motives of children's social workers. The process also benefited Brent staff who became more knowledgeable about the barriers for people in this community and and improvement in communication. The Voter Registration Project made a difference to the creativity with which communication around democratic process and encouraging residents to register is approached. It had a positive impact not only by increasing the number of registered electors but also by expanding the council's approach to communicating its messages.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users of allotments in the borough are not representative in their diversity. An allotments project which examined users and people on waiting lists for allotments developed a plan to increase the diversity of allotment users to make sure that allotments are accessible and appealing to all sectors of the community (see Allotments Project Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Allotments Project made a difference by inspiring action to change the service as a result. Practical actions taken such as the installation of new accessible toilets, improvement of car park areas and sites and creation of new entrances to make the allotments more accessible all had a positive impact upon communities. In addition, partnership work with the community, health organisations and the voluntary sector means that the user profile is becoming more diverse, with a further analysis of the impact of the project on the demography of users due to be reported in 2015.
		Business plans review past performance, demonstrate how past objectives have been achieved, review performance and set new objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's approach to business planning has been reviewed for the 2015-16 financial year. Equalities and equality analysis has been implemented more fully into this process, and the new approach makes it more straightforward for departments and service areas to set their priorities in a way which links more thoroughly to equality objectives (see 3.16 Business Plan Example – Sports and Parks Service Plan 14-15 and 3.16 Equality Analyses identified in ENS Business Plans Feb 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate business plans, broken down into service areas, have a strong equalities focus with a timetable for equality analysis for the year ahead and predictions for any potential impacts declared in the initial planning process. This makes it easier for the Departmental Equality Groups to plan ahead for consultation and data collection to inform equality analyses of projects, policies and strategies, and set objectives accordingly.
		There is evidence of improved or improving outcomes, disaggregated where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance and progress is benchmarked on a bespoke version of 'inPhase' to monitor across KPIs and data reviewed regularly on a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This makes a difference by demonstrating progress over time in improving outcomes for residents. Examples include:

			appropriate to demonstrate the effects on different communities/protected groups.	customisable dashboard. Where appropriate this is disaggregated and demonstrates improvement across 12 month periods, grouped into the Brent Borough Plan priorities.	the number of 'Troubled Families' where outcomes have been achieved (disaggregated by age), the proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support and the number of young people engaged with sports facilities in the borough.
3.17	There is increased satisfaction with services amongst all users, including those with protected characteristics.		There is evidence of how levels of satisfaction have improved over time. Users of the service are representative of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Residents' Attitude Survey demonstrates improvement in residents' and service users' satisfaction across a range of areas. This information is disaggregated to provide a clear profile of the communities (see Residents Attitude Survey Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This makes a difference by providing data to demonstrate which groups are most or least likely to be satisfied with a range of council services. It provides information which was used to decide upon the priorities in the Brent Borough Plan 2015-19 and upon which services are then able to then rely and use when making decisions about service delivery.
			There are examples of different customers' experiences being analysed and acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the Residents Attitude Survey formed the basis of a comprehensive series of workshops delivered by the Research and Intelligence Team at the council. A thorough analysis of responses took place and staff members from across the departments attended sessions to gather information for use in service delivery. The results of the survey also informed the Brent Borough Plan 2015-19. (see Residents Attitude Survey Case Study and Borough Plan Consultation Case Study) The response of the council to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The workshops provided a comprehensive overview of responses given by over 2,000 residents who were representative of the borough. The responses were also implemented into the Borough Plan and have been communicated through a variety of mechanisms such as an infographic report in the Brent Magazine. This means that residents are listened to and kept informed throughout the whole process of consultation and implementation of their views into service delivery.

				complaints also demonstrates good practice in analysing and responding to customers' experiences (see 3.14 Complaints Annual Report 2013-14)	
3.18	The organisation has taken steps to safeguard the human rights of individuals where these have been threatened.		Where threats to human rights have been identified steps have been put in place to reduce or mitigate the threat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent council attracted national press coverage recently for the positive action of the social care team after discovering a male resident with a learning disability had travelled from England to Pakistan to enter into an arranged marriage (see: 3.18 Social Services Pakistan Marriage Case – March 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The case highlighted the necessity of capacity when residents with learning disabilities are making decisions. It also demonstrated the work of the council in tackling threats to human rights in the borough in partnership with the police and legal sector.

Skilled and committed workforce

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place but needs improving
4. In place and effective

	EFLG criteria	Rating (1-4)	Questions to ask in self assessment	How was this done and what is the evidence?	What difference has this made?
3.19	<p>The organisation's workforce profile (including the profile of major providers of commissioned services) broadly reflects the community it serves/local labour market.</p>		<p>There are appropriate examples of positive action to improve diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent council was again awarded the Two Ticks 'positive about disability' symbol by Job Centre plus in 2014 for its continued commitment to employing and developing disabled people (see 3.19 Two Ticks Disability Accreditation intranet publication April 2014) • In 2014-15 Brent also joined the Business Disability Forum and Race for Opportunity, as well as developing its progress with Stonewall. Brent Housing Partnership are currently Diversity Champions accredited by Stonewall. In addition, we have recently joined The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI). • The council's Recruitment and Selection Policy was reviewed in 2014 to reiterate that all recruitment panels must be representative of race and sex. A new training module on unconscious bias and equality and diversity in recruitment is currently being developed and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Two Ticks accreditation has embedded Brent's commitment across five areas: to recruit, retain, consult and train disabled staff members. We have increased our retention rates for disabled members of staff, with the percentage of disabled staff members increasing recently despite widespread staff restructuring and reductions. We joined the Business Disability Forum with which we meet regularly to discuss our progress on objectives such as publicising and implementing reasonable adjustments for staff members. • Brent's unconscious bias training will raise awareness of the issues relevant to recruitment and selection amongst senior management and those responsible for recruitment.

				<p>will be launched in the Summer of 2015 (see 3.19 Recruitment and Selection Policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's apprenticeship programme aims to recruit and develop young people who live in the borough. In addition, the council commits to recruiting 'looked after children' as part of the apprenticeship programme. The 2014 intake of apprentices were a from a range of diverse backgrounds, with 97% identifying as BAME and 6% declaring that they have a disability. (see Apprenticeship Programme Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Apprenticeship Scheme makes a difference by contributing to the Borough Plan priority of helping people into employment. The council has worked, and will continue to work, hard with partners to encourage and support other employers to help young people into work. The council celebrated National Apprenticeship week with a number of events, including a job and apprenticeship fair in the Civic Centre. The scheme has made a difference across all departments, with 53 apprentices recruited in 2014 split across all service and non-service departments. 20% of placements went to Looked After Children.
			<p>There is evidence that the workforce profile broadly matches the local labour market/community profile. This is continually monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Brent Workforce Equalities Report is published annually, and data collected regularly on the council's workforce and reported to the corporate Diversity Reference Group by each department (through the Departmental Equality Groups). The current workforce is extremely representative of the community we serve across all protected characteristics. Where gaps have been identified in diversity at senior management level a review was undertaken by the Deputy Leader of the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The method of data capture and ongoing communications across the whole council has meant that all staff understand the importance of diversity data collection and how this can help in developing and maintaining a diverse and committed workforce. As well as the annual workforce equalities report each Departmental Equality Group reports on a quarterly basis on the profile of their staff. This is then monitored by the corporate Diversity Reference Group.

				<p>and an Action Plan put into place. The Equality Team, in collaboration with senior management teams, encourage and monitor ongoing diversity data collection across the whole council (see 3.19 Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2013-14 and 3.19 Equalities Monitoring internal communications Oct 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Executive is committed to the ongoing regular collection and analysis of workforce data to make sure that the council is representative (see 3.19 Chief Executive's blog – Equalities Review and data collection) 	<p>There is a deficiency in diversity at senior management which has been identified, and an action plan is currently in place following the review into HR and equalities by the Deputy Leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As well as chairing the corporate Diversity Reference Group, the council's Chief Executive communicates regularly her personal commitment to monitoring the workforce profile and the importance of this matching the community profile of the borough. The leadership commitment to this means that the council demonstrates regularly to all staff that it is committed to achieving a representative workforce and works consistently to put processes in place to make this happen.
			<p>There are reasonable explanations for gaps (e.g. the community profile is constantly changing or largely retired population) and what the organisation is doing about it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are gaps in representation, especially of women and people identifying as BAME, at senior management levels of the council. In spite of this the council is actually ranked highly in this area when compared to the London average. However, action is being taken to improve the diversity at this level and the council is striving to improve in this area by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite being one of the best councils in London for BAME representation at senior management level the council recognises that there is still work to be done to achieve higher diversity at this level in the workforce. This acknowledgment and subsequent action plan makes a difference in the way that the council is perceived by

				implementation of mentoring schemes, development of a leadership development programme and an action plan devised in response to Cllr Pavey's review of HR and equalities (see 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Action Plan 2015)	staff and partners, demonstrating that we are committed to increasing the diversity of senior staff.
3.20	Prioritised equality outcomes for the whole workforce are being achieved		Strategic, innovative and holistic approaches have been considered to improve outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014 Cllr Pavey, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Equalities undertook a comprehensive review of the HR and Equalities policies and procedures within the council. Cllr Pavey consulted with staff at all levels of employment, as well as with comparable organisations and the LGA. (see 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Review and Action Plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review, report and subsequent recommendations by the Deputy Leader have made a difference to the approach the council will take to increasing the diversity of senior management. It consolidates a range of proposals to work towards the aim of a representative senior team. The report resulted in a range of recommendations and an action plan has been developed, with responsibility taken by senior managers across the council for its implementation.
			There is good use of flexible working arrangements and career pathway initiatives to address potential barriers and under representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has an established approach to flexible working which is outlined in the policy. A recent staff survey on the implementation of the Flexible Working Policy received an overwhelmingly positive response. A further equality analysis of the policy is being undertaken, informed by the results of the staff survey (see 3.20 Flexible Working Survey Results and 3.20 Flexible Working Policy Equality Analysis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent's flexible working policy reflects a new, modern approach to service delivery, with greater emphasis on performance management and a culture of flexible working that benefits both staff and customers. Many staff now work remotely and in a way which better meets the needs of each service – there is an increase in the core working hours over a longer day and staff members are able to agree with their managers how best to

					manage their own time to balance individual work-life needs. Hot desking, home and mobile working are now the norm.
			Staff are involved in developing and monitoring these policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is consultation on new staff policies across all areas, and staff across departments are involved in the equality analysis process of the implementation of each policy, strategy and procedure (see 3.20 HR Attendance Policy Equality Analysis Example – March 2015) • Trade Unions advise and are involved in representing staff views on new and existing policies, and trade union representatives are located within the council full time (see 3.20 Trade Union Duties and Activities Policy) • There is an HR Improvement Group which provides a forum for senior management who represent a cross-section of the council's departmental structure to provide scrutiny and challenge on new, revised or current HR policies procedures, as well as analyse compliance (see 3.20 HR Improvement Group TORs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are consulted at the development process for policies, and a layer of scrutiny and review is engaged by groups such as the HR Improvement Group. This makes a difference by making sure that staff are able to contribute to the development and implementation of policies. In addition, staff are also involved in the ongoing monitoring of this by contributing to further consultation (such as policy-specific surveys and ad hoc meetings) and by undertaking regular equality analyses of policies to assess the ongoing impacts of their implementation.
3.21	The authority has a robust and comprehensive set of employment data and uses this to inform its workforce		Workforce data includes a wide range of information and protected characteristic profiles including pay levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Workforce Equalities Report contains a wide range of information across all protected characteristics which is broken down, where possible and appropriate, by pay level. (see Annual Workforce Equalities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Workforce Equalities Report has been presented in a more accessible, infographic format since 2013. It provides a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of all employees as well as highlights the strengths

strategy and management practice				<p>Report 2013-14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2015, equalities data on shortlisted candidates will be incorporated into regular ongoing data collection within the recruitment process. • An Equal Pay Audit was carried out in February 2015. The workforce was analysed based on gender, whether they were on a full or part time contract, their pay grade, basic salary (pro rata for part time employees) and length of service. The findings showed that overall there is a very small gap of 0.5 per cent. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equal Pay Toolkit indicates that this is an insignificant gap which falls well within the range of acceptability (see 3.21 Equal Pay Audit Report 2015) • We break down staff grievances by equality characteristics on a regular basis (see 3.21 Grievances – equality characteristic breakdown) 	<p>and challenges that the council faces. This is then used to inform discussions at senior level meetings (including the corporate Diversity Reference Group) and to set objectives regarding the relationship between pay scales and diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of the Equal Pay Audit have made a difference by providing data to reinforce fairness and equal pay in the organisation. It has also provided information upon which further recommendations have been made, such as the consideration of conducting further pay audits into pay differences on grounds of disability and race. • This enables us to monitor the impact of implementation of the council's grievance policy and to identify and address any issues as and when they arise.
				<p>The organisation understands the effects of employment policies and practices on its workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following consultation on all staff policies, some of the HR policies and procedures were updated following a 2014 review. As part of this process further equality analysis took place to establish the full effect of the implementation of the policies on staff across all groups (see 3.20 HR Attendance

				<p>Policy Equality Analysis Example – March 2015)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A staff survey on the implementation of the Flexible Working Policy was undertaken to establish the impact of this upon all staff members (see 3.20 Flexible Working Survey Results) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey demonstrated the impact that the Flexible Working Policy has had upon staff members from all departments within the council. The policy has made a difference in that many staff now work remotely and in a way which better meets the needs of each service – there is an increase in the core working hours over a longer day and staff members are able to agree with their managers how best to manage their own time to balance individual work-life needs. Hot desking, home and mobile working are now the norm.
			<p>The organisation has sufficient information about staff to inform robust equality analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an ongoing drive, led by the Chief Executive, to encourage all staff to complete their equalities information on the internal HR system 'Oracle' (see 3.19 Chief Executive's blog – Equalities Review and data collection and 3.19 Equalities Monitoring internal communications Oct 2014) There is a range of information available about staff which is used regularly to inform the EA process. Most recently the data was used to inform a large amount of EAs on budget proposals which would 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Executive's commitment to the recording and monitoring of equality and diversity information makes a difference to the council's approach to the collection of this information. This highlights to staff that the council is committed to collecting and analysing this data and explains the reasons for its importance. This approach to equality analysis makes a difference by providing staff with a thorough base of robust data with which to make complicated and often challenging decisions, especially around budget and service

				<p>potentially impact upon staff. Each proposed staff restructure or proposal which would indirectly affect staff (for example through moving or reducing service provision) was subject to a rigorous staff-specific EA which was separate from the proposal's EA of impact upon service users and residents (see 3.15 Cumulative Equality Analysis Report 2013-14)</p>	<p>reduction decisions. There were a large amount of budget proposals to analyse in 2014-15 and this approach to data collection meant that there was robust, up to date information available to inform equality analyses on all projects, policies and service changes proposals which may affect staff.</p>
			<p>The workforce profile is updated regularly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Department has a Departmental Equality Group (DEG) which meets every two months. As part of the updates and action planning discussed at these meetings the DEG must provide a profile of its current departmental workforce. This is done alongside the annual workforce equalities report and monthly KPIs which are reported on (see 3.2 DEG Update to DRG Example – Environments & Neighbourhoods March 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development and ongoing work of the DEGs has changed the way in which equalities information on staff is used on an ongoing basis. The data is reported to the corporate Diversity Reference Group and used to inform decisions about policies, service changes and projects which may have an impact on staff.
			<p>Data is looked at organisationally and service by service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As mentioned above, the DEG's report directly to the corporate Diversity Reference Group (see 3.2 DEG Update to DRG Example – Environments & Neighbourhoods March 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the work of the DEGs, data on workforce diversity is collected at all levels of the council before being collated regularly by the DEGs and published annually in the Workforce Equalities Report, as well as analysed quarterly by the corporate Diversity Reference Group
			<p>It is possible to analyse data by all the protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on all characteristics is available in the annual workforce equalities report. It is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure that the data is aggregated by all equality

			characteristics.	disaggregated where appropriate (where anonymity is not compromised). The Equality Team provides guidance about why we collect the data, and regularly provide updates and internal communications about the importance of recording all protected characteristics of our workforce (see 3.19 Annual Workforce Equalities Report 2013-14 and 3.19 Equalities Monitoring internal communications Oct 2015)	characteristics and progress communicated regularly to all staff means that all employees are aware of the importance and ongoing work around equality and diversity in the workplace. The data is broken down to show strengths and challenges and can be disaggregated for example to show the diversity of staff members at certain pay grades.
3.22	The organisation has an excellent set of policies and procedures in place which are actively promoted to staff from all protected groups and used by managers to promote equality.		Positive and tangible outcomes have been delivered as a result of the implementation of a wide range of policies and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is very successful at recruiting and retaining disabled members of staff, and workers who return from maternity leave (see 3.19 Workforce Equalities Report 2013-14) Positive feedback was received from the respondents of the Flexible Working Staff Survey in 2015. It indicated that employees use and understand the policy, and that it has had a positive impact upon their work (see 3.20 Flexible Working Staff Survey results) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This makes a difference by demonstrating our commitment to recruiting and retaining talented disabled members of staff, and staff returning from maternity leave in an updated, measurable way. Flexible working has made a positive difference to the culture of the organisation. Staff have reported that they have 'better morale' and 'less stress' and in the recent Flexible Working Survey 77 per cent of staff agreed that "flexible working helps us to provide better services for residents."
			These are being communicated to staff with protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Executive regularly writes in her monthly blog about the implementation of policies and procedures across the council, which is shared with all staff members (see 3.22 Chief Executive's blog LGBT History) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment of leadership and senior management makes a difference to the way that equality and diversity is perceived within the council by encouraging engagement with relevant issues. It raises the profile of diversity

				<p>Month, 3.19 Chief Executive's blog – Equalities Review and data collection)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted focus groups are in development and events also take place on a regular basis. For example there have been recent staff focus groups for BAME staff and an internal event with a follow-up debrief for staff identifying as LGBT (see 3.22 Focus Groups Staff 2015 Overview and LGBT event write up intranet Feb 2015) 	<p>outcomes and objectives and communicates a standardised cross-council approach to the tackling of gaps and issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up meetings from events such as LGBT History Month, International Day for Disabled People and International Women's Day demonstrated an eagerness from staff to contribute further through focus groups and development of staff networks in the organisation. These are now in development. The communication of objectives and outcomes relating to equality characteristics are circulated to all staff and those with protected characteristics through these mechanisms.
			<p>The organisation compares well with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent has the fourth highest proportion of BAME top earners of all London councils. The proportion of BAME top earners increased by three per cent at Brent and decreased by two per cent at other London boroughs over the past year. The council identifies that the baseline for comparison is low and has set out an action plan to improve this (see 3.4 Cllr Pavay HR & Equalities Review January 2015) The council analyses its data comparatively on a quarterly basis through the London Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This demonstrates that despite scoring highly in comparison to London in this area, the council identifies that work still needs to be done to work towards a representatively diverse senior management. The Cllr Pavay review has made a difference in the way this will be approached as it sets out high-level recommendations and an action plan has been developed with corporate and senior management responsibility for each area. This makes a difference by providing a wider base of

				<p>Dashboard which is shared across management within the council. The council compares comparatively well with others in areas such as reducing the amount of young people not in education, employment or training and crime rates (see 3.6 Comparative Organisations LAPS Benchmarking Dashboard 2014-15)</p>	<p>information from which staff can assess their work and priorities against. It benchmarks data on a range of areas and means that management have regular access to updated progress on their KPIs in comparison with other organisations and use this regularly to set objectives.</p>
3.23	The authority has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups in respect of staff engagement.		<p>Staff surveys are carried out regularly. (What do they say?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent Access Audit was carried out to assess the impact of the recently built Civic Centre upon staff and service users. Changes were implemented as a result of a survey about the building, for example amendments to meeting rooms to make these more accessible to staff members with visual impairments (see Accessibility Audit case study) • A Flexible Working staff survey was carried out in February 2015. The results of this showed that the policy has had a general positive impact upon staff member's work and ability to carry out functions (see 3.20 Flexible Working survey results) • In 2012, as part of Brent's Investors in People accreditation, mini staff surveys were carried out on a range of themes across all departments, and demonstrated an increase in staff satisfaction across a number of areas such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Building User survey provided the council with information about positive aspects of the accessibility of Brent Civic Centre, as well as where gaps exist. As a result an action plan has been implemented with £75k ringfenced for improvements, some of which have already been completed (installation of Changing Places toilets, improvements to signage, etc). • The Flexible Working Survey provided us with information about how the Flexible Working Policy is implemented across the council and where there are issues or inconsistencies. Staff agreed that flexible working leads to increased productivity (84 per cent) and commented positively about the impact of the policy. The results enabled the Equality Team to analyse decisions such as denials of flexible working requests by equality

				performance management and managerial support (see 3.23 Mini IIP Staff Surveys 2012)	characteristic to ensure there are no inequalities.
			There is evidence that levels of satisfaction have improved over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini staff surveys taken as part our Investors in People accreditation in 2012 demonstrate an increase in satisfaction levels of staff. Answers to questions were compared to the last full council staff opinion survey (2010) (see Mini IIP Staff Surveys 2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff levels of satisfaction increased in areas such as partnership working (+6 per cent) and line management motivation (+7 per cent). There was a particular improvement in satisfaction levels of performance management.
			There are examples of different staff experiences being analysed and addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014 focus groups to discuss the experiences of BAME staff members were held with employees across the council (see 3.23 Focus Groups 2014 Staff Suggestions 2014) We then undertook further focus groups in 2015 to analyse staff perceptions and experiences and we are addressing suggestions through a report of recommendations presented to the Corporate Diversity Reference group. A number of actions are now in progress including development of staff networks (see 3.23 Staff Focus Groups 2015 report and 3.23 Proposed Staff Networks TOR 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus groups made a difference by providing suggestions and information which influenced the development of the Equality Strategy 2015-19. In addition, they have triggered further discussion about the need for ongoing focus groups and staff networks within the organisation. This was then discussed by the corporate Diversity Reference Group in March 2015 and an action plan developed for the implementation of staff involvement.
3.24	There are high satisfaction levels with the working environment across all staff groups particularly those with protected characteristics.		Staff surveys and focus groups confirm satisfaction with the working environment including when analysed across all protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups in 2014 and 2015, responses to Cllr Pavey as part of the HR & Equalities Review and the Mini IIP Surveys in 2012 demonstrated that staff were generally satisfied with the working environment and highlighted areas in which there is room for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus groups have made a difference by providing information about the working environment at Brent. The Facilities Management Team attended the focus group for disabled staff, for example, and fed back improvements and

			characteristics.	improvement. Focus groups were held for staff from across all protected characteristics with a particular focus on ethnicity, gender and disability.	action that will be carried out as a direct result of disabled staff's comments and suggestions.
			There are effective occupational health facilities available to staff and these are being taken up across the authority and proportionately across all groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brent's work towards the Healthy Workplace Charter demonstrates the use of Occupational Health Services by staff members. Data on the gender and age of users of occupational health services is collected, and this is also broken down by service area (see 3.24 Healthy Workplace Charter Action Plan March 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through recruitment processes, internet and intranet information and internal communications, staff are aware and use the comprehensive occupational health services offered by the council. The work towards achievement in the Healthy Workplace Charter has also provided a forum in which staff are aware of ongoing occupational health work and offers available to staff.
3.25	Action is underway to ensure equal pay is fully implemented.		Overall, there is evidence that men and women are receiving equal pay equal for work (subject to any major industrial, legal or other barriers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive equal pay audit was undertaken in February 2015. The workforce was analysed based on gender, whether they were on a full or part time contract, their pay grade, basic salary (pro rata for part time employees) and length of service. The findings showed that overall there is a very small gap of 0.5 per cent. Very small gaps were identified within two pay grades (PO6 and PO8) of 1.8 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equal Pay Toolkit indicates that these are insignificant gaps which falls well within the range of acceptability and do not require further investigation (see 3.21 Equal Pay Audit Report 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equal Pay findings were circulated to the corporate DRG who discussed this in detail, as well as being submitted to the Trade Unions and HR Improvement Group for consultation. It will then be published on the intranet and Brent's external website. This has made a difference by publicising our approach to equal pay for equal work and providing information to staff and residents to demonstrate our accountability.

			The situation is being monitored / audited regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has committed to undertaking an equal pay audit every three years. Brent's Pay Policy and Procedure is designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently on all pay related matters. The council is committed to paying the London Living Wage to all permanent staff. Every post is subject to a job evaluation when it is created or when there is significant change in the post responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One difference the equal pay audit based on gender has made is to inform further consideration of pay audits to analyse pay differences on grounds of disability and race to identify any pay gaps between disabled and non-disabled staff and between staff from difference ethnic groups.
3.26	Harassment and bullying at work are dealt with effectively and most staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect. Staff are confident that there are robust procedures in place to address harassment and bullying at work and they trust management to deal with incidents effectively.		Information is available to show there has been an improvement for all groups— monitoring data, perception surveys, and qualitative data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity monitoring has increased and the method in which it is presented has improved over time (see Workforce Equality Reports from 2011 - 2014) Mini staff surveys taken as part our Investors in People accreditation in 2012 showed that there has been an improvement in staff satisfaction in a range or areas. an increase in satisfaction levels of staff. Further surveys including the building user survey and flexible working survey are broken down to assess the impact upon staff from all groups (see 3.23 Mini IIP Staff Surveys 2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has made a difference to the quality of analysis of the information. Improved quality and quantity of data means that staff characteristics and views through focus groups and surveys are able to be comprehensively analysed.
			There is evidence that staff from protected groups feel they are treated with dignity and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff focus groups carried out in 2014 demonstrated a range of staff experiences. Positive feedback about feelings of dignity and respect has been received in these focus groups, as well as through other methods such as LGBT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have expressed that they would like to continue to develop and improve the respectful environment within the organisation and further focus groups along with a staff network are in development to begin this.

				History Month events where staff shared their experiences of working for Brent Council (see 3.22 LGBT event write up intranet Feb 2015)	
3.27	Managers and staff can give examples of improved equality outcomes they have contributed to.		Managers and staff are accountable for ensuring equality outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Departmental Equality Group is responsible and fully accountable for reporting on equality outcomes and delivering these to the corporate Diversity Reference Group every two months (see 3.6 DRG Minutes January 2015 and 3.2 DEG Update to DRG Example – Environments & Neighbourhoods March 2015) Each service area reports on equality objectives as KPIs on a quarterly basis. This is collated and monitored regularly. Staff are responsible for updating their progress against equality KPIs and these are then reviewed by Departmental Equality Groups, Departmental Management Teams, the Diversity Reference Group and the Corporate Management Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DEGs provide an overview of ongoing equality outcomes which has made a difference by moving the reporting of this to staff with a specific equality and diversity responsibility. The DEGs are accountable to the corporate Diversity Reference Group which meets quarterly and reviews each DEG's update and action plan for the next quarter. By embedding equality performance indicators into the overall performance monitoring process this ensures that managers and staff are accountable, officers can benchmark their performance against comparable internal and external indicators and the information available on the shared Brent database ('InPhase').
			Good performance is being recognised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's Appraisal policy and procedure and template forms make sure that talent is recognised within the organisation. In addition the council has a comprehensive Performance and Development Scheme and Guidance A leadership development programme is due to be developed in 2015 following recommendations by Cllr Pavey, Lead Member for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for the leadership development programme will make a difference to the way in which high performing employees are identified and offered development opportunities. The Performance and Development Scheme and Guidance sets out a framework of agreed standards and expectations of managers and employees for managing and

				<p>Equalities, to further identify talent, especially from underrepresented groups, and retain and develop staff members who consistently demonstrate good performance (see 3.4 Cllr Pavey HR & Equalities Review and Action Plan, and 3.27 Performance and Development Scheme and Guidance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are annual Staff Awards ceremonies, which are well-attended and have a strong reputation within the council for providing recognition of exceptional talent within the council (see 3.27 Staff Awards 2014 Information) • Staff working on particularly successful or innovative projects are often nominated for, shortlisted for and win a range of awards, most recently for the Flexible Childcare Scheme, the Young Local Government Awards and the National Government Opportunities Excellence in Public Procurement Awards (see 3.7 Press Coverage for Living Wage Incentive 2014-15 and Flexible Childcare Case Study) 	<p>recognising individual performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Staff Awards make a difference by boosting morale and encouraging good relations between staff members of all grades and departments. They identify performance and talent in a range of categories across the whole council. • These awards raise the profile of the organisation and demonstrate the work which underpins the achievements of a range of council services. They reward staff who perform highly in services and who have dedicated time and resources to making sure the best outcomes are delivered for service users and residents.
			<p>Issues relating to protected characteristics and equality practice are challenged confidently and effectively by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has robust and updated bullying and harassment procedures within its Grievance Policy and Procedure which sets out explicitly the grounds of a grievance which incorporates any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers understand the complexities and intricacies of equality legislation, protected characteristics and the impact of policies and procedures on staff. They receive comprehensive

			managers.	<p>of the protected characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Brent Manager Essentials programme provides structured training for managers on performance management, financial management, HR systems and policies and other elements. The training has a specific module on Equality and Diversity in management as well as being integrated throughout the whole of the training process in modules such as 'Code of Conduct' and management responsibilities. 	<p>training on a range of equality issues. For example a recent refresher training on equality and diversity was delivered to the Senior Management Team of Environment and Neighbourhoods, a department undergoing widespread restructure and changes to representation on its Departmental Equality Group, to make sure that all senior managers were equipped with up to date and accurate knowledge to effectively challenge equality and diversity issues within their departments.</p>
3.28	<p>Decision makers understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities.</p>		Changes have come about as a result of any equality training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Equality Analysis (EA) system was implemented in 2014. The aim was to move to a more thorough informed understanding of the impacts to any new or proposed changes to services, policies, procedures and strategies and to equip staff with the knowledge and confidence to undertake robust EAs. Training was delivered by the Equality Team and refresher sessions are led regularly by the team to the Departmental Equality Groups. There has been specific cultural competence training carried out for social workers within the Children and Young People's department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new approach requires all staff members responsible for EAs to undertake a comprehensive training module on the process before being allocated access to the new online system. To make equality analysis more robust and efficient, responsibility for EAs has been moved to the Departmental Equality Groups who now audit and sign off all EAs in their service areas. Attendees at the Cultural Competence Training fed back and reported that they found the training "very useful" and made them "more aware and sensitive to events that could affect safeguarding children and young people."

			Staff feel their skills have improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each employee must undertake and complete an Equality Analysis e-learning module before being allocated access to the online system in order to complete EAs. (see Equality Analysis System Review Case Study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff who have responsibility for equality analysis have been significantly upskilled in this area. The Departmental Equality Groups are now confident in challenging equality and diversity issues, and regularly feed back to their senior and departmental management team meetings to deliver relevant information and training.
			Staff feel they are able to relate effectively with a range of clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from our Cultural Competence Training for social workers demonstrates an increase in attendee's knowledge and ability to relate more effectively with a wide range of clients. A new Customer Service Training programme was implemented and comprised various modules including 'dealing with difficult situations' – a workshop programme in which staff received interactive theatre-based training and practice sessions with actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees at the cultural competence training sessions remarked that they have "started to implement learning from the course during outreach activities" and that the training "has made (me) more socially aware."
			Staff are able to answer questions about the council's equality priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality and diversity are embedded within all council functions. All equality priorities and objectives are publicised widely and staff are regularly invited to events and given the opportunity to contribute to the equality agenda. Equalities is embedded in all training including the Corporate Induction training days (see 3.1 Corporate Induction Agenda Example) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having equality and diversity training embedded within wider training and induction courses means that skills are developed to effectively engage with and challenge equality issues from the beginning of a staff member's employment. It has made a difference in making equality and diversity an entrenched and ongoing part of work rather than being seen as

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff members engage regularly with the equality team, and each equality officer provides regular advice and assistance at Departmental Equality Group meetings. There is an e-module on equality analysis for which there are high completion rates across all council department (see Equality Analysis System Review Case Study and 3.28 DEGs Terms of Reference April 2015) 	a separate function.
		Is there any feedback from users?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from attendees at events organised as part of the 'Break Barriers; Open Doors' series is often positive and encouraging from both staff and service users. Users of services such as the library also give feedback which affects stock selection, and which inspires projects such as the recent LGBT youth group 'Mosaic' stock selection project (see Mosaic & Library LGBT Stock Selection Case Study) Feedback from focus group attendees in 2014 was also collected, and has informed further plans to facilitate focus groups and develop a staff network in 2015. Staff members regularly email suggestions to the Equality Team on issues such as celebrating equality-themed events and providing feedback on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from events makes a difference to the way in which future events are planned and delivered, as well as providing the council with an overview of who attends and participates in events and where there may be gaps in participation. The Mosaic and Libraries partnership project has made a significant difference in the involvement of young people identifying as LGBT in council services Feedback on surveys such as the Flexible Working Policy Survey and the Building Accessibility Audit demonstrate that staff feedback is taken seriously and to a high level, and can provide tangible changes within the workplace. For example, following the Civic Centre building accessibility 	

				<p>communications (see 3.23 Focus Groups 2014 Staff Suggestions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the Building Accessibility Survey for the Civic Centre demonstrated that staff are willing to contribute to making the environment more accessible and engaging and that the council is able to take suggestions forward and implement these (see 3.28 Accessibility Improvements Internal Communications 2015 and Accessibility Audit Case Study) • Redacted information provided by the Complaints Team demonstrates that users feel that they are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process of issuing any complaints (see 3.28 Complaints Response and Action Plan Example Redacted) 	<p>audit a recommendation was made that people who are visually impaired may find it difficult to see the doors to all meeting rooms, as these are glass with grey handles. As a result, bright coloured prints were implemented on to every meeting room door in the Civic Centre to make the rooms more accessible.</p> <p>Customers who have experienced the complaints procedure often give good feedback to staff members about the way in which their issue has been dealt with. This makes a difference by improving satisfaction rates with council services even when a complaint has been triggered. For example, the following quotation was recorded by a staff member at Brent Housing Partnership: 'Mr Smith has asked me to convey his gratitude to everyone he has dealt with regarding his complaint. He said he has always been treated politely, courteously and professionally with whomever he has spoken to, or met, regarding his complaint.'</p>
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We have identified the following areas for improvement	Priority 1-10 (1 is high)	Resources needed	Potential barriers	Potential solutions	If appropriate, how are we planning to involve stakeholders and community members?
Increase BAME representation at senior levels by implementing all recommendations of HR & Equalities Review and Focus Groups	1	Time commitment from senior leaders and Equality Team, financial resources to implement programmes such as leadership and mentoring programmes	Lack of staff engagement	Devising new, long terms approaches to increasing diversity and reinforcing the commitment of the council in addressing the issue.	Continued consultation with staff through focus groups to inform the direction of any leadership programme, network and/or mentoring scheme.
Undertake a full staff survey	3	Process of implementation – possibility of commissioning external company, time resources to establish questions and benchmark	Financial resources	Undertake mini-staff surveys for representative sample	
Service user diversity profiles to be established for all service areas	3	Time resources of Equality Team and Business Intelligence and Research team			
Establish staff networks	3	Time resources of staff, financial resources to support groups			
Improving the uptake of equality analysis training by staff	5	Commitment by senior teams to encourage staff to undertake training	Staff time	Continue to communicate importance of robust understanding of equality analysis and potential impact upon service users	

 Brent	<p style="text-align: center;">Equalities Committee 13 July 2015</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Chief Executive</p>
<p>For Information Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Review of Equalities and HR Policies and Practice</p>	

1.0 Summary

1.1 This covering report accompanies the attached Review of Equalities and HR Policies and Practices in Brent (attached as Appendix 1) led by Cllr Michael Pavey, Deputy Leader of the Council and undertaken between October 2014 and January 2015. The report is a wide ranging review of staffing matters and HR policies and practices within the Council. The methodology consisted of scrutinising documents and policies, discussions with managers and staff, and was supported by the Local Government Association and other external experts in order to ensure objectivity and fairness. The review is supported by an Action Plan which sets out the actions that the council will take to implement the findings. The Scrutiny Committee on 30 April considered this item and the Action Plan and its views are detailed below.

1.2 The Equalities Committee will be updated on the Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members of the Equalities Committee are invited to comment on the actions detailed in the plan in Appendix 2 to support the implementation of the review's findings in light of the update presented to the meeting.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Overall, the HR policies were found to be sound, but the report acknowledges that people do not necessarily always apply them consistently. As a result the published report details 31 specific recommendations for improvement. The review states that Brent has the highest proportion of black and minority ethnic (BAME) staff amongst London boroughs and the proportion of BAME top earners is in the top quartile of London boroughs.

- 3.2 However, it also acknowledges that there is a real challenge in ensuring that people from BAME backgrounds are represented within the senior management team, a problem that is replicated in organisations across the country. Much of the review focuses on how this challenge will be met including recommendations around developing talent within the council to ensure progression opportunities, implementing a mentoring system to nurture the talent of underrepresented groups and introducing compulsory 'unconscious bias' training for all managers and recruiters.
- 3.3 The plan sits within the Council's broader planning framework and in particular:
- the Corporate Plan
 - the Equality Strategy Action Plan
 - the HR Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.4 The chief executive has overall responsibility for the successful implementation of the Plan and Members of Corporate Management Team have specific oversight of each of the themes. The Directorate for HR and Administration will provide support to the chief executive and will ensure that monitoring reports are produced within deadlines. The plan will be monitored at officer level through the Corporate Management Team (CMT), the HR Improvement Group (HRIG) and the Diversity Reference Group (DRG). At Member level, progress will be monitored by the General Purposes Committee though there is likely to be some overlap with this Committee..
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 30 April 2015 considered the Review and Action Plan. In response to concerns expressed that staff were not aware of the Council's corporate priorities, it heard that a key priority over the last few years had been to improve planning across the council, with the development of the Borough Plan influencing the work of individual teams and benefitting from a high level of public engagement. The Corporate Plan reflected the Borough Plan and was being turned into aims and objectives for individual teams. The committee heard that equalities data previously recorded by staff had not been transferred across to the Oracle system and staff were being urged to complete the information again, although they were not obliged to provide this information. The committee was informed that the action plan would be delivered within existing resources. Equality had been a high priority for the council prior to the review, as reflected in the work undertaken to work towards the Equalities Standard for Local Government and the Investor In People awards. An additional piece of training for all managers had been prepared regarding unconscious bias and it was proposed that this training would be delivered by 1 June 2015 and the action plan updated to reflect this. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee felt that there needed to be robust monitoring of the action plan and the committee agreed that an update should be provided on the progress achieved in six months time.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None directly arising from this report

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The review of Equalities and HR Policies and Practices and the draft action plan, attached as Appendix 1, recommends changes which aim to systematically embed best practice across the Council with regard to equality and diversity to ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 The council aims to encourage, develop and support all staff and grow talent from underrepresented groups. The intention of the review and action plan is to ensure these HR policies are applied consistently across the council.

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Review of equalities and HR policies and practice at Brent Council

Foreword

Two core values underpin this review:

Every Brent Council employee deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Every employee deserves the opportunity to rise within Brent Council, regardless of their background. Indeed, the Council benefits enormously from the diversity of its workforce, and would be enhanced further by greater diversity in senior management.

This review finds that Brent is generally a happy and inclusive place to work. But there is plenty we can do better.

Policies are mostly sound. But policies are implemented by people and we need to do more to ensure that they are consistently applied. When this does not happen we need to work harder to ensure that the whole Council learns the lessons.

This review recommends changes which aim to systematically embed best practice across the Council, to ensure that treating one another with dignity and respect is at the very heart of everything we do.

Two-thirds of Brent Council employees are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic communities. This makes us the most diverse Council in London and probably in the world. Everyone in Brent should be immensely proud of this. But we should also be immensely disappointed that only 14% of our most senior staff are from BAME communities. It is even more disappointing that this meagre figure is actually one of the very best in London!

Underrepresentation of BAME groups in senior management was identified by all participants in this review as a critical challenge. This isn't just a Brent problem – it is a serious issue across the whole country. Shockingly, the percentage of public appointments made to BAME people has virtually halved in the last five years.

The moral case against this is crystal clear. But the fact that underrepresentation is actually worsening shows that, sadly, the moral case alone is insufficient. Fortunately there is an equally strong business case. Analysis by McKinsey into private sector boardrooms shows that diverse boards generate far bigger profits than ethnically narrow boards.

This is hugely relevant for Brent Council. We are facing immensely difficult times with plummeting budgets and escalating costs. We simply cannot afford to waste talent: we need the very best people in management. Greater diversity in senior management will broaden our perspectives, maximise the potential for creative ideas and increase our understanding of the

communities we serve.

There is a long history of well-meaning attempts to improve diversity at the top, but ultimately they have achieved very little. All participants in this review rejected anything which smacks of tokenism. Consequently the review makes recommendations which seek to draw upon the unique diversity of Brent to produce a bespoke model for real change.

We want to encourage, develop and support our best talent from underrepresented groups. But at the same time we want to grapple with the uncomfortable truths around unconscious bias. We want to maximise opportunities for all Brent Council staff to rise within the organisation, regardless of background. But it is not simply a lack of talent or ambition amongst BAME communities which makes senior management overwhelmingly white - and we want to challenge everyone at the top to recognise this.

BAME underrepresentation in management is a major national problem. It will take time for Brent to change. But change is exactly what this report attempts to achieve. We want Brent Council to become a trailblazer, so that in years to come we can all be as proud of our diverse management as we are of our diverse workforce and our diverse community.

I'd like to thank everyone who helped to produce this report: all the staff who shared their thoughts with me, face to face and in writing; all the elected Members who contributed such rich ideas; the Trade Unions and all the external partners who offered their invaluable expertise.

Every one of us has a vital role to play in making the recommendations in this report a reality. Let's work together to make it happen.

Cllr Michael Pavey
Deputy Leader of Brent Council
December 2014

1. Purpose of the Review

Brent Council is deeply committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. This review was established to ensure that our HR and Equalities policies and practices reflect this commitment.

The Terms of Reference set out the areas that the review would cover:

- surveying a comprehensive suite of policies to identify those which need detailed consideration
- reviewing those which need detailed consideration
- reviewing staff knowledge, understanding and practice
- reviewing progress towards the Gold standard in Investors in People
- reviewing progress towards the Excellence Standard in the Equality

Framework for Local Government

- ensuring that diversity underpins all aspects of the review, including BAME involvement.

Methods included:

- analysis and scrutiny of written reports and documentation
- discussion with staff
- discussion with Members
- advice from external experts
- use of staff focus groups
- best practice comparison with other local authorities.

The review was specifically tasked with making recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

The review therefore focused on the policies and practice of the organisation. There was a specific emphasis on making recommendations to ensure that the diversity of staff reflects the diversity of the borough, at all levels, and that working practices and organisational culture enable this outcome. Analysis of HR policies and processes formed a significant part of the review, as these are a key mechanism for enacting our organisational objectives and values with our personnel.

It is important to note that the review was not a review of our HR department. It is about the role each person has to play in making Brent Council the best possible place to work. There are clear recommendations in relation to employment policies and practice, and these require the action of the entire organisation and crucially managers at all levels.

2. Methodology

The review considered a range of information sources and commissioned work-streams:

- LGA review of policies: The LGA reviewed the Council's relevant employment policies – the scope and recommendations are set out in appendix one at the end of this report.
- Focus groups with staff: these were facilitated by a new Operational Director. Participants were randomly selected from payroll records¹ to enable two general staff focus groups and one for middle managers. Participants were asked to comment on management engagement and to share their experience at the Council before contributing ideas for improvement.
- Roundtables with external stakeholders, examining:

¹ For general staff focus groups, each 66th employee on the payroll list was selected; for managers, each 28th. Each group was widely representative both of ethnicity and of pay scale.

- Increasing the number of BAME staff in senior positions
- Ensuring that the culture of the organisation is an open and positive one

Stakeholders included a range of skilled professionals with a wealth of experience across staff management and equalities practice within the public, private, advisory and not-for-profit sectors. They were:

- Dr Doyin Atewologun, Queen Mary University
 - Peter Hall, Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion
 - Vernal Scott, Marshall ACM
 - Diane Rutherford, BRAP equalities charity
 - Stephen Shashoua, Three Faiths Forum
 - Matthew Critchlow, Thrive Training
- Drop-in sessions to provide the opportunity for any member of staff to provide views.
 - Opportunities for staff to provide views anonymously.
 - Discussions with Trade Unions and written submissions from UNISON the GMB, the NUT and Unite.
 - The Council's Investors in People (IIP) Adviser, accompanied by a BAME adviser new to the Borough, reviewed progress towards the Gold standard. This involved discussions with a number of focus groups with participants selected randomly from payroll records.¹
 - Additional external oversight was provided by Charles Obazuaye, Director of Human Resources at the London Borough of Bromley. Mr Obazuaye provided expert advice at the start of the review and commented in detail on the draft report.
 - A review of equalities data – encompassing recruitment, retention, progress across the equality characteristics. The Brent Diversity Profile is attached to this report as Appendix 2.
 - Meetings were held with the HR Departmental Management Team and the Diversity Reference Group- in order to assess staff knowledge, understanding and practice of policies, and to suggest improvements.

3. Current status and recent achievements

Over recent years, Brent has taken a much more systematic approach to policies, practice and evaluation, in keeping with best practice. As the IIP assessor wrote, 'Leadership is strong, embraces the critical role of people management and exemplifies a willingness to improve and develop.'

Notable improvements include:

- The modernisation of staff management policies and procedures.

- Achievement of the Investors in People (IIP) Silver standard – an achievement made by a handful of employers.
- Committing to the Excellence in Equality Framework for Local Government, one of a small minority of local authorities to do so.
- Re-accredited as a “Two Ticks” employer (*‘positive about disabled people’*).
- A methodical approach to equalities monitoring and undertaking equality analysis on employment policies and procedures
- Establishment of the Diversity Reference Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, to assess and improve practice across services – addressing both internal and external (resident service) issues to underpin equality.
- Joined Stonewall’s Diversity Champions Programme to strengthen sexual orientation equality in the workplace.
- A more systematic approach to consultation with staff on HR policies, procedures and practice through the Trade Unions and HR Improvement Group.

Improvement plans include:

- Working towards Excellence in the Equality Framework for Local Government, which replaced the Equality Standard for Local Government in 2009, under which the Council had received an ‘adequate’ rating.
- Working towards the IIP Gold standard.
- Joining Race for Opportunity, the race campaign from Business in the Community, designed to improve employment opportunities for BAME people and to increase raise diversity at Board, senior executive and management level.
- Joining the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- An equal pay audit to identify and eliminate any unjustifiable pay gaps.

In terms of practice, the Council has:

- Rolled out flexible working across the organisation.
- Established a programme to recruit 100 apprentices over the next three years, with 20 per cent of places reserved for Brent Looked After Children.
- Addressed income inequality directly by becoming a Living Wage employer.
- Established a learning development programme which encompasses skills and technical development.

What does the data tell us?

Brent’s workforce equalities report, covering the period from April 2013 to March 2014 shows that:

- The ethnic diversity of the workforce closely reflects the community it serves; Brent has the highest proportion of BAME staff amongst

London boroughs and the proportion of BAME top earners is in the top quartile of London boroughs.

- Brent has excellent retention rates for disabled staff – in fact, the number of disabled employees increased at a time of reducing staff levels, meaning either that staff feel more confident to disclose that they have a disability or that the proportion of disabled staff is now higher.
- Brent achieves strong rates of retention for staff returning from maternity leave, a reflection of the emphasis that has been placed on flexible working.

However:

- Though the Council tends to outperform its peers in local government, BAME, disabled and female members of staff are under-represented at senior management level, compared to the overall workforce – this is examined in more detail in the findings section of this report below.
- The proportion of Asian, disabled, Hindu and Muslim job applicants fell at each stage of the recruitment process.

4. Findings

It was very welcome to see a number of Council staff provide input into the review. Some of these submissions related to particular policies and policy changes. Each of these issues was investigated as part of this review.

Two staff workshops indicated some gaps in management practice. The overwhelming majority of attendees had regular team meetings and one-to-ones with their managers, but at the two non-management workshops 45% and 30% respectively said they had not had an appraisal in the last twelve months. More than half at each session had not seen a copy of their team or service plan.

Overall, feedback from across workstreams of this review indicates good policy and practice. Staff and manager focus groups noted the positive impact of being co-located at the Civic Centre, good provision of training and development, and the commitment to flexible working. The lIP interim assessment commissioned to inform this review shows that the foundations are in place to achieve more, noting that the organisation is 'ahead of the game' in its approach to leadership, management and people issues. The assessment cites the positive impacts of policies and systems, as well as leadership, both managerial and political.

However, as the data shows, there are long standing inconsistencies regarding the representation of employees from different backgrounds at the highest tiers of the organisation. Brent achieves better than the majority of its peers in relation to diversity, but the baseline for comparison is disappointingly low, so that comparisons are an ineffective measure of good practice. Engagement across the workstreams that informed this review shows that, unsurprisingly, this gap is recognised by staff, management and stakeholders alike as stated via the different engagement mechanisms.

This is a serious national issue. Underrepresentation of BAME communities in leadership positions in the UK is actually worsening. In 2001/2, 8.6% of public appointments and reappointments went to members of BAME communities. This figure peaked at 9.2% in 2006/7 before trending downwards to just 5.5% in 2012/13.

It would be easy for Brent Council to hide behind this national picture but we are adamant that our residents deserve the very best, and we believe that diverse leadership is a significant step towards achieving this.

It is incredibly important to the political and managerial leadership of the Council that the organisation is an inclusive, equal opportunities employer. The workforce – at all levels – should reflect the community it serves, one of the most diverse in the UK. The Council is an organisation that draws its legitimacy from its community and it is therefore only right that its political representatives and its officers reflect that community. Within focus groups, staff and managers all cited diversity within both the community and the organisation as a key attraction to working for Brent Council, and this has been reiterated by individual anonymous submissions.

Being inclusive and reflecting diversity is not only an expression of our values, it is a matter of good business sense. There is now abundant evidence that organisational diversity is directly linked to performance. Research by McKinsey² into private sector boardrooms has found that diverse boards generate 66% better average returns on equity than narrowly comprised boards. In the public sector, Roger Kline³ has drawn upon comprehensive research to show five ways in which NHS organisations lose out through a lack of diversity:

- a. Patients may be prevented from getting the best clinicians and support staff if candidates' ethnicity unfairly influences recruitment and promotion or leads to BAME staff being unfairly treated in the disciplinary process or in other aspects of their working life.
- b. If BAME staff are treated unfairly then that is likely to have an impact on morale, absenteeism, productivity, and turnover. It will also lead to the loss of time and money through grievances, employment tribunals and reputational damage.
- c. There is an established link between the treatment of BAME staff and the care that patients receive. Research shows the workplace treatment of BAME staff is a very good barometer of the climate of respect and care for all within NHS trusts and correlates with patient experience.
- d. There is evidence of a link between diversity in teams (at every level including Boards) and innovation. At a time when the NHS needs to

² Thomas Barta, Markus Kleiner & Tilo Neumann, 'Is there a payoff from top-team diversity?' McKinsey Quarterly, April, 2012.

³ Roger Kline, 'The 'snowy white peaks' of the NHS: a survey of discrimination in governance and leadership and the potential impact on patient care in London and England.' Middlesex University Research Repository, 2014.

transform its care, lack of diversity may carry a cost in patient care for everyone

- e. Leadership bodies which are significantly unrepresentative of their local communities, such as NHS Trust Boards, will have more difficulty ensuring that care is genuinely patient centred – with resultant failings in the provision or quality of services to specific local communities that have particular health needs, including BAME communities and patients.

Although local government differs from the private sector and from the NHS, facing its own challenges and idiosyncrasies, diversity at all levels is equally important and equally valuable from a business point of view. By accurately representing our community and by drawing on the talents of the widest variety of people, we can operate more effectively, efficiently and innovatively.

There was a broad consensus from all the people contributing views about the need to address this issue within the organisation, using the diverse talent that already exists, and this is reflected within the recommendations.

In terms of the culture of the organisation, the consensus is that it is open and inclusive. However, it needs to take practical steps to translate values into competency and practice. A key theme across workstreams has been that policies are implemented by people, so we need to ensure consistency in applying those policies. This has been highlighted by staff, HR professionals, the LGA, Investor in People (IiP) assessors and the trade unions alike.

The Council has successfully delivered intense change at a time of significant challenge. Change management skills, including the ability to support staff appropriately, are increasingly important.

On a functional level, the review has provided the opportunity to assess the detail of policy and practice and this is reflected in the findings set out below.

5. Overall issues

5.1 Finding: There has been significant modernisation and improvement of management policies and practice. This has been recognised in focus groups and the Council is well on track to achieve gold status in IiP this year. This is impressive and only achieved by two per cent of organisations.

- The Council needs to continue on its improvement journey, using external assessment and internal engagement to measure progress and inform improvements.
- The move to a single location has provided for great opportunities in terms of shared learning and culture, which may not have been fully realised.

- Flexible working is appreciated and cited as a positive aspect of working at the Council, but focus groups suggest that there may be inconsistencies in application by managers, which should be addressed.
- The Council has benefitted from experienced and skilled interim appointments during a time of unprecedented change. The Council is now very well placed to move forward with permanent appointments and build on recent successes noted in the review process.

5.2 Finding: Diversity is celebrated and prioritised, but the senior management of the Council is not representative of the community it services, nor of the diversity of the wider workforce.

- We are not reflecting the diversity of our population at senior levels, nor tapping sufficiently into the talent of our entire workforce.
- There is a lack of progression for BAME staff, resulting in a deficit in representation at senior levels. Whilst we can demonstrate better performance than the majority of our local government peers, our performance is not good enough. There is a clear drop-off in progression for BAME staff from grade PO3 to PO6, becoming even more pronounced at higher grades⁴, thus indicating barriers to the progression of staff from these backgrounds:

Grade	SC3-6	S1-P2	P3-6	P7-8	HAY
% BAME staff	69	68	52	32	14

- As the table above shows, whilst the proportion of BAME staff at Scales 3-6 and SO1 – PO2 are at 69 per cent and 68 per cent respectively, the proportion drops to 32 per cent at grades PO7-PO8 and to just 14 per cent for Hay graded staff.
- Breaking down the HAY grade further, 10.1% of the 14% BAME figure are Asian, and only 2.5% are Black. Within the PO grades, the equivalent figures are 21% Asian and 29% Black, whilst across the organisation as a whole 26% are Asian and 31% are Black. So in addition to the general underrepresentation of BAME communities in management positions, there appears to be a further issue of underrepresentation of the Black community in the most senior positions.
- It will take time to change this picture. This report makes a series of recommendations which hopefully will lead to change, however it is important to manage expectations about the timescale entailed for them to take effect. It is also important to recognise that not everyone wants to be a manager. But it is essential to ensure that those who do wish to manage should be able to rise through the system solely on the

⁴ Brent Diversity Profile 2013-14

basis of their ability and work. Equally importantly, everyone in the organisation, manager or otherwise, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

- In terms of disabled staff, there is uneven distribution across grades, but there does not appear to be an issue regarding progression. We should, however, be mindful that employees may become disabled during the course of their employment at the council: we should therefore ensure that managers are aware of the need to provide reasonable adaptations for staff affected in this way.
- As regards female staff, whilst there appears to be a drop-off at higher grades, this appears to be a function of the higher proportion of women within the workforce at lower grades than is the case in the local population; thus the proportion of women at higher grades has a greater correlation with the general population than at lower tiers. The equality delivered via single status is likely to reinforce our attractiveness as an employer, and we should continue to ensure that our practice remains consistent with our values.
- Attempts specifically to address deficits in progression across equality characteristics do not appear to be effective; whilst BAME staff are more likely to undertake training opportunities, this is not resulting in the same career progression enjoyed by non BAME staff. A systematic approach that achieves positive change is required.
- Across the different engagement mechanisms, notably the staff focus groups and stakeholder roundtables, there was a clear rejection of initiatives that are perceived to be tokenistic and superficial. It is of course desirable that posts offered externally result in greater diversity at senior levels, but there is clear support for approaches that enable us to 'grow our own'. Such an approach has the advantage of being more sustainable, by providing a supply of skilled senior managers who reflect the borough's diversity and by demonstrating that equality is embedded at all levels. However, this too should be embedded in good leadership and management at all levels.
- An innovative mentoring programme to support the development of underrepresented groups would certainly be positive. However this must be a bespoke offer, reflecting the uniqueness of Brent and the challenges faced by our communities. An 'off the shelf' initiative would be a wasted opportunity. Instead, we should work with Brent employees to design a programme reflecting the unique makeup of Brent and the specific challenges faced by our communities. In establishing this programme, the Council should consider options such as increasing opportunities for secondment within the organisation and actively encouraging staff from one department to undertake projects in another. The Cabinet in Brent reflects the diversity of the borough well and more could be made of this in support of the council's leadership and management programmes. Indeed, interaction with elected

members, more generally, could do much to increase understanding of diversity and equalities in Brent. A new development programme offers the opportunity to widen access to these experiences.

- The Council must be honest and acknowledge national research which shows that well-meaning development initiatives alone are insufficient. We are all at risk of unconscious bias⁵ so the Council should explore robust interventions such as reverse mentoring⁶ of senior management.
- Overall, it was considered that learning and development has improved over the past year, for example, staff reported within the liP interim assessment that 'Training and development are now very proactive'. However, we need to strengthen our approach to succession planning, talent management and progression, beyond those schemes operating at entry level (apprenticeships and graduate schemes). We lack consistency across the organisation in encouraging talent and ensuring progression – addressing this would represent an opportunity to promote consistent representation of all equality characteristics at different levels within the organisation – and perhaps begin to tackle the BAME deficit at the top tiers of the Council.
- Whilst the local apprenticeship scheme enjoys high levels of inclusion for BAME staff, the intake for graduates from the National Graduate Development Programme is less diverse. This might be expected given that the national diversity profile is much lower than that of Brent. There may be opportunities to be more inclusive by placing a greater emphasis on local recruitment or by introducing an in-house management training scheme. Indeed, staff groups suggested that this could be a way to increase diversity at senior levels.
- Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC 2012) states: "Because the general equality duty requires you to analyse the effect of your organisation's functions on all protected groups, public authorities will not be able to meet the duty unless they have enough usable information." Brent collates a good range of data which is presented in an accessible manner (see appendix 2.) This data should be shared widely and used as the benchmark from which to build progress. However, there are areas where data collection could be improved, and thus services enhanced. In general terms, better recording of the reasons for decisions at each stage of the recruitment and selection process would increase understanding and perhaps point to the actions necessary for improvement. More specifically the Council should collect equalities data on all shortlisted candidates. In the case of existing employees, the Council is highly

⁵ Embedded 'people preferences', formed by our environment, experiences and other peoples' views about other groups of people, which may affect our attitude to people based on their personal characteristics or background

⁶ 'Reverse mentoring' refers to an initiative whereby a more senior executive is paired with a more junior employee, in order to offer insight and experience into aspects of working life the executive may not have had exposure to, with regards to, for example, age, gender, ethnicity, or technological knowledge.

dependent upon self-declaration. Participation rates are improving but the transfer of data to Oracle presented problems as staff had to re-enter data. According to the most recent intranet message, 94% of staff have yet to fill out their equality data on Oracle. It is understandable that completion of equality forms often feels like additional bureaucracy, but efforts must be made to show staff that submitting their equalities information is actually a vital step to gradually addressing the challenges faced by underrepresented groups.

- Recruitment data should be supplemented with qualitative information, so the Council should consider setting up a focus group of randomly selected new-starters to test their experience of our recruitment and selection processes.
- In terms of service delivery for the Brent community, the Council should consider updating the categories it uses when collecting data to reflect the changing profile of Brent. Specific categories for the Somali, Eastern European and Latin communities would enhance the quality of data collected.

Issues regarding policies

5.3 Finding: There have been significant improvements to the Council's policies. However, further revisions to those policies are required in order to ensure robustness and ongoing adherence to best practice.

- The independent LGA review was generally positive about the core policies but identified some improvements in key policies, which would strengthen our framework.
- Feedback received from the GMB union suggests support for the majority of changes suggested by the LGA, as well as support for the Council's overall approach to the issues examined by this review.
- The NUT has separately requested that the Council clarifies the difference between sickness absence and medical appointments for disabled staff.

Issues regarding practice

5.4 Finding: Generally, feedback from staff themselves suggests that practice is good; however, improvements can and should be made to employee management practice to achieve a more collaborative and inclusive culture.

- Engagement with staff suggests inconsistent application of policies and procedures, including as regards flexible working. There has clearly been great progress in implementing good management practice, but the Council should also seek to ensure that internal communications

explain expected practice, underpinned by a clear explication of staff and manager competencies and behaviours.

- At present, there are few reported incidents of bullying and harassment. The Council has an emphasis on informal resolution: according to the LGA this represents good practice. Consideration should be given to ensuring consistency, support and follow up within the informal resolution framework.
- The Council lacks a systematic Council-wide approach to learning from HR and legal processes when complaints are raised; whilst this is not uncommon, we have an opportunity to make improvements. In addition, this may give rise to inconsistent management responses. Thus, though HR takes the lead, individual managers are responsible for learning from ETs and grievances, and reviews take place with HR and within departments. Improvements should be made in terms of cross-organisational learning, peer review and Council-wide improvements.
- The Code of Conduct does not at present adequately articulate the behaviours and practice expected of managers and staff. Such behaviours should be clearly articulated, communicated and reflected in:
 - recruitment and selection processes
 - ongoing team and line management
 - appraisal processes
 - learning development processes and interventions.

Addressing this presents an opportunity to emphasise the significant priority the Council attaches to valuing diversity.

- Evaluation of practice and understanding of staff experience should be regular and Council-wide.
- Internal communications should be strengthened to become a two-way flow of information. It is critical for senior management to be able to communicate values and good practice to the wider workforce. But it is equally important that communications enables the wider workforce to articulate their experiences to senior management. In two staff focus groups, more than half had not seen a copy of their service or team plan and participants suggested that improvements could be made to internal communications, including the ability for greater staff engagement and management visibility, for example through senior managers attending team meetings. This is increasingly important given the scale and pace of change. Managers themselves need to be supported to communicate effectively, but must also play the key role in staff engagement. Given the current and future constraints on funding, it is important that central advice and strategy is complemented by good practice within departments.

In summary, the four key issues are:

1. **There has been significant modernisation and improvement of management policies and practice. This has been recognised in focus groups and the Council is well on track to achieve gold status in liP this year. This is impressive and only achieved by two per cent of organisations.**
2. **Diversity is celebrated and prioritised, but the senior management of the Council is not representative of the community it services, nor of the diversity of the wider workforce.**
3. **There have been significant improvements to the Council's policies. However, further revisions to those policies are required in order to ensure robustness and ongoing adherence to best practice.**
4. **Generally, feedback from staff themselves suggests that practice is good; however, improvements can and should be made to employee management practice to achieve a more collaborative and inclusive culture.**

Section 6 below sets out recommendations to address these.

6. Recommendations

It should be noted that recommendations do not seek to impose a prescriptive approach, but to provide a framework and support to address the issues identified. We should ensure that clear expectations are set for all staff and managers regarding objectives and behaviours, provide the support to meet those expectations – and trust them to deliver. Evaluating success in delivery and ensuring consistency of outcomes must also be a key element within our approach. **Officers should be charged with producing an action responding to the recommendations set out below.**

6.1 Achieving consistency in staff progression and diversity at management levels

The Council needs to ensure that senior staff recruitment achieves greater diversity, when it recruits staff externally and by being more successful in promoting internal talent from our diverse workforce. A systematic approach to progression is likely to assist in addressing specific recruitment and retention issues, such as in Children's Services, by 'growing our own'.

- a. The Council should consider how to have a more systematic and successful approach to the progression of its own staff to more senior positions. There should be an expectation of all managers to recognise and nurture talent, supported by appropriate organisational inputs, such as providing opportunities to experience new responsibilities and for involvement in projects to develop experience and skills, support for development and qualifications, mentoring and coaching. This expectation should be clearly articulated in the Council's competency

framework. Talent should be identified within all sections of the Council, not merely from the professions from which those at the top table are traditionally drawn. There is a need to accelerate plans to support the career progression of high-potential staff from groups currently under-represented – this review notes the importance of this being a Council-wide responsibility and an integral part of managing people. **Council officers are therefore asked to prepare a report establishing how we can identify talent internally in a more structured way, supporting managers to ensure that staff are linked into and benefit from development opportunities and the support required to progress.**

- b. The Council should devise an **innovative mentoring programme** to support the development of underrepresented groups. This must be a bespoke offer, reflecting the uniqueness of Brent and the challenges faced by our communities, and the challenges faced by members of those communities hoping to build a management career in Brent. Brent employees should be actively involved in developing this scheme.
- c. The Council should set up a **‘reverse mentoring’ programme** to broaden managers’ understanding of staff experiences and barriers to progression for staff from groups underrepresented at management level.
- d. The Council should audit its provision of **unconscious bias training** and ensure that every employee and, indeed, every elected member undertaking recruitment and selection has undertaken this training.
- e. **There should be a process for ensuring that training meets both organisational and personal professional development objectives.**
- f. **Recruitment, appraisal and progression should be competency based**, thus reducing factors that may have counted against diversity by replicating historical barriers for under-represented groups, such as educational attainment. This does not imply compromising quality, on the contrary, it emphasises the skills and behaviours required to do the job.
- g. **Any member of staff or elected member involved in recruitment and selection must have been trained in the process.** At the same time, there needs to be more **comprehensive recording of the decisions made at different stages of the recruitment and selection process** with regular summary reports considered by the HR Improvement Group.
- h. The Council **should review the success both of its apprenticeship programme and its participation in the National Graduate Development Programme for Local Government.** Participants on

both schemes should be asked about their experiences and if the schemes can be improved.

- i. **The Council should introduce a local graduate development programme to complement the national scheme**, enabling access to our talented local graduates who come from one of the most diverse and exciting places in the UK.
- j. **The Council should undertake research with applicants to understand the reasons behind the attrition rate for Asian, disabled, Hindu and Muslim job applicants within the recruitment process, in order to inform improvements in the process.**
- k. When undertaking recruitment **the Council should aim to collect equalities data on all shortlisted candidates**. The Council should undertake a corporate push with senior leadership encouraging **all employees to update their individual equalities profile on Oracle**. The Council should also considering **updating the categories it uses when collecting data** from Brent residents to specifically identify the Somali, Eastern European and Latin communities.
- l. The Council should **analyse the recruitment diversity statistics by pay grade** to establish if there are differences in recruitment patterns for different types of role.
- m. The Council should **set up a focus group of randomly selected new-starters to “test” their experience of our recruitment and selection processes**.
- n. The Council should have an open discussion at senior levels, and across officers and elected members, on whether to **consider setting indicative, non-binding targets for recruitment of BAME staff to senior management posts**.

6.2 Achieving excellence in employment policies

- a. **The Council should devise an action plan with suitable timelines for implementing the recommendations of the LGA review of employment policies**. Where recommendations are not implemented as part of this plan, a written explanation should be provided. A full list of recommendations is attached at Appendix 1.

6.3 Achieving excellence in employment and management practice

- a. **The Council should implement a systematic approach to learning from internal grievance and legal processes (tribunals) when complaints are raised and upheld**. The Council currently undertakes reviews following such processes, but these are undertaken within the Department involved. There should be a process for ensuring organisational learning, peer review and a process for making

improvements that goes beyond the department affected, thus avoiding inconsistent management responses and ensuring that the opportunity for organisational improvement is taken. In addition, the Council should monitor the level of internal and external processes, regardless of the outcome, in order to understand staff perceptions and respond as appropriate.

- b. The Council **should establish a more corporate approach to learning from grievances and tribunals**. This should include an annual report summarising the number of grievances and tribunals raised against the Council (all cases anonymized), breaking these down by service area and issue. The Council should similarly produce an anonymised summary of the findings of exit interviews conducted over each year.
- c. Policies are only valid if they are articulated within a clear framework and are applied in a consistent manner. Staff and manager focus groups emphasised the need for a 'one council' approach, with greater collaboration between different parts of the organisation. **The Council should ensure that it has a clear competency framework, developed in collaboration with staff**, which includes expected behaviours, in order to ensure a supportive and inclusive working culture. The framework should make specific references to celebrating our diversity, working well with a diverse range of people and managing in an inclusive manner. It should also underline the importance of the appraisal process and ensuring that all employees not only regularly see their team or service plans, but feel an integral part in their delivery. This is crucial to removing barriers to progression, and ensuring that managers demonstrate the appropriate skills and attitudes. **This framework should be developed in consultation with staff and unions and should be reflected in the Code of Conduct and reinforced through internal communications**. It should inform recruitment, progression, appraisal, conduct and capability processes.
- d. **There should be a regular (biennial) staff survey to measure staff perceptions and employee management practice**. This should be conducted independently, with the results anonymised and provided to staff. There should be a focused Council-wide action plan to respond to the findings, with each Director responsible for responding to issues specific to their areas of responsibility.
- e. **Regular focus groups should be held with different staff groups** such as BAME staff, disabled staff, women and LGBT staff. Their views should inform planning to achieve the Excellence Standard in the Equality Framework for local Government.
- f. **The Diversity Reference Group should continue to meet regularly and to assess and advise on responses to equalities data,**

examine progress on the action plan resulting from this review and any issues raised by staff.

- g. **Each Departmental Management Team should consider equalities issues relevant to its Department and its workforce on a quarterly basis.**
- h. **The Council should internally review its approach to bullying and harassment.** The LGA agrees that the Council's emphasis on informal resolution is good practice. However, it is important that adequate systems are in place regarding incidents which are informally resolved. Whilst respecting individual sensitivities, the Council must ensure that it can monitor trends and corporately learn lessons where appropriate.
- i. The Council should develop a policy or guidance on reasonable adjustments to **assist managers to support staff who acquire a disability** while working for Brent.
- j. **Equality of status and pay delivered via 'single status' is likely to reinforce our attractiveness as an employer, and we should continue to ensure that our practice remains consistent with our values in this regard.**
- k. Officers are asked to examine and **clarify the Council's approach to medical appointments for disabled staff** as distinct from sickness absence.

6.4 Communications

- a. **This review should be published on the staff intranet.**
- b. **The action plan produced in response to this report should be shared widely. A report of progress against that plan should be produced at six monthly intervals** and reported to the committee noted in 5a). This review of progress should also be published on the staff intranet.
- c. There should be a **review of internal communications**, ensuring that members of staff have the opportunity to engage with career opportunities, and that communication is a two-way process. It is noted that in order to be truly effective, there must be effective local implementation by managers.

6.5 Member involvement

- a. **The Council should establish a committee of elected Members to oversee progress towards the Excellence Standard in the Equalities Framework for Local Government.** This would involve both support for development and close scrutiny of the Council's

approach to equalities, including monitoring the progress of the action plan responding to the recommendations of this review.

- b. The Council Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider this review.** The production of the report of progress, referred to in 4b) above, may be an opportune moment.

Appendices

1. LGA Review of Policies: recommendations
2. Brent Diversity Profile

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Action Plan: Draft for Scrutiny Committee

1	ACHIEVING CONSISTENCY IN STAFF PROGRESSION AND DIVERSITY AT MANAGEMENT LEVELS		
CMT Lead, Andy Donald, Strategic Director, Regeneration & Growth			
Objective	Key Activities	Progress Milestones	Success criteria
To ensure best practice in implementing recruitment policies and procedures	Train all managers and elected members who participate in recruitment and selection, incorporating unconscious bias into training	<p>Members of the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee to be trained by end April 2015. Unconscious bias training for these Members undertaken by end of April 2015.</p> <p>Build from, training on unconscious bias and recruitment and selection into annual Member development programme, May 2015</p> <p>New e-learning module on recruitment including unconscious bias training to be developed by end of April 2015 and rolled out to all managers by the end of June 2015.</p>	100% managers and Members involved in recruitment and selection to be trained so unconscious bias does not impact on recruitment and selection decisions. 90% good or excellent satisfaction levels on training
	Ensure decisions made at each stage of the recruitment and selection process are properly recorded	<p>Recruiting managers issued with advice note and pro-forma amended by end of April 2015.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting on recruitment and selection to HRIG from September 2015.</p>	100% managers involved in recruitment and selection are trained
	<p>Collect and report on equalities data at all stages of the recruitment process.</p> <p>Analyse recruitment diversity statistics by pay grades</p>	<p>Implement recommendations in current annual equalities report throughout 2015</p> <p>Equalities data for all stages of the recruitment process to be included in the Annual Equalities Workforce report 14/15, by June 2015.</p> <p>Incorporate new reporting requirements in the annual Equalities Workforce report by April 2016.</p>	<p>Robust data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Corporate HR KPIs demonstrate a positive direction of travel to demonstrate diversity at all levels of the workforce.</p>

<p>To ensure best practice in implementing HR polices</p>	<p>Ensure consistent application of HR policies and procedures and adherence to them by managers.</p>	<p>Guidance on the role of DMTs in respect of workforce and equalities to be developed by end of April.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting to DMTs on departmental compliance with HR policies and procedures commencing May 2015.</p> <p>Annual report with recommendations for improvement produced in October 2015 and reported to HRIG.</p> <p>Review of progress to achieve liP Gold to CMT April 2015 Achievement of IIP Gold level December 2015.</p> <p>Monthly case management reviews with HR and Legal April 2015 onwards.</p> <p>As routine, meetings with relevant strategic and operational directors, HR Director and legal to consider all complex employee relations cases and potential employment tribunals</p>	<p>Achievement of liP Gold level</p> <p>Low level of tribunals and success in defending them</p> <p>Evidence of monthly case management meetings</p> <p>Evidence of senior management engagement in employment tribunal cases and other complex employee relations cases</p>
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<p>To ensure there is a creative approach to the development of talent & leadership</p>	<p>Develop a leadership development programme for staff from under-represented groups to support promotion into senior manager posts</p> <p>Prepare a report establishing how to identify talent internally in a structured way.</p>	<p>Programme developed by May 2015 and agreed by HRIG, TUs and CMT by June 2015.</p> <p>Participants identified and programme rolled out between September 2015 and March 2016. Programme evaluated April 2016. Report prepared for December 2015, incorporating feedback from liP Gold Assessment</p> <p>Recommendations rolled out by April 2016.</p>	<p>Minimum of 90% satisfaction rating from all participants.</p> <p>Increasing proportion of: BAME senior managers; 1 female senior managers; disabled senior managers.</p> <p>Managers are supported in ensuring that staff are linked to and benefit from development opportunities and support required to progress.</p>
<p>To support the development of under represented groups</p>	<p>Introduce innovative coaching and mentoring arrangements, including a diversity mentoring programme to support under-represented groups and reverse mentoring arrangements</p>	<p>New programme developed and agreed by HRIG, TUS and CMT by May 2015.</p> <p>New policy rolled out by from June 2015.</p> <p>Build diversity mentoring and coaching arrangements into the BAME senior management development programme from September 2015</p> <p>Pilot reverse mentoring scheme from September 2015 and review in July 2016</p>	<p>100% new senior managers have mentors</p> <p>100% apprentices and national graduates have mentors</p> <p>Staff participate in reverse mentoring and the pilot is well reviewed.</p> <p>Upper quartile staff satisfaction levels on staff and management development in staff survey</p>

To review and refresh the apprenticeship and graduate schemes so they are high quality programmes leading to employment	Evaluate the effectiveness of the current apprentice programme establish improvements	External review of apprentice programme undertaken by end of April 2015 and recommendations implemented by June 2015. Review to incorporate focus group with apprentices to capture views about programme and opportunities for them to continue their career within Brent.	Internal schemes to grow our own future workforce are solid and effective. Brent in top quartile for number of apprentices in London Councils.
	Review and improve the internal arrangements in place for the management of the National Graduate Development Programme for Local Government.	Review and agree changes to the Graduate Programme by June 2015. Roll out improved internal management arrangements of programme in advance of new intake in September 2015.	Support to reduced unemployment within the borough. 95% satisfaction with Brent graduate programme. 95% graduates get jobs in Brent
	Introduce a local graduate development programme to complement the national scheme.	Proposals considered and agreed by October 2015 and rolled out in January to attract graduates graduating in June 2016.	Graduates more reflective of the community
To engage council staff in developing workforce strength and diversity.	Ensure all staff have updated their equalities profile on Oracle. Review equality reporting categories.	Ongoing campaign to encourage staff and managers to update equality profile on Oracle to increase reporting levels for all equalities reporting data. DRIG to monitor quarterly.	100% equalities profile reporting on Oracle
	Consider implementing indicative, non binding targets for recruitment under-representative groups at senior levels.	Review KPIs for recruitment of under-represented groups at a senior level by June 2015. Consider report at CMT by October and then at GP Committee by December 2015.	Achievement of corporate KPIs for recruitment to under represented areas at a senior level.
	Collect feedback during Induction regarding experience of recruitment process.	Feedback reported quarterly to CMT from July 2015. Annual report on recruitment incorporates experience of new employees, from September 2015 .	

2	ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES CMT Lead, Cara Davani, Director of HR and Administration		
Objective	Key Activities	Progress Milestones	Success criteria
<p>To ensure Brent's Human Resources policies and procedures reflect best practice so managers are supported well in leading and managing their teams.</p>	<p>Review and update policies in accordance with LGA feedback</p> <p>Review the equality analyses of HR policies every three years</p>	<p>Consider and make minor policy changes by the middle of March 2015. Revise Code of Conduct by end of April 2015. Provide a written explanation where an LGA recommendation is not being implemented by the end of April 2015. Consult with trade unions and HRIG on proposed changes by end of March 2015. Agree minor policy changes with CMT & Lead Member by end of April 2015.</p> <p>Revise the recruitment policy by end of April 2015 to stipulate all managers must be trained before interviewing.</p> <p>Publish revised policies on intranet by end of April 2015. Communicate changes to policies to staff and managers by end of April 2015.</p> <p>First review to be undertaken in June 2015</p>	<p>100% managers complete Brent Manager Essential training</p> <p>100% managers who undertake investigations are trained in disciplinary and grievance investigations</p> <p>Number of employment tribunals is low against benchmarked councils (benchmarks TBA) and ET cases are successfully defended</p> <p>HR KPIs achieved</p> <p>100 % Adherence to procedures and timelines in HR policies</p>

3	ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICE CMT Lead, Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Adult and Social Care		
Objective	Key Activities	Progress Milestones	Success criteria
To establish a more coherent competency framework for the Council which defines clearly different behaviours and personal skills that determine how all staff should do their jobs.	Produce a new competency framework and embed it in the work of the Council	Develop a framework setting out a set of revised staff competencies by July 2015. Review our approach to bullying and harassment and ensure best practice is captured in the revised competencies. Ensure relevant policies recognise the requirement to be competency based by September 2015. Devise a training programme that supports the framework for implementation from July 2015.	All recruitment and selection reflects the competencies framework. 100% appraisals reflects the competencies
To ensure the views of staff are used to shape the development of the Council	Establish bi-annual staff survey	Staff survey designed and undertaken by March 2016. Results analysed and fed into the new Corporate Plan	
	Organise a series of regular focus groups with different staff groups.	Programme of focus groups for BAME staff, disabled staff, women and LGBT staff agreed by DRG by June 2015 Focus group on recruitment and selection arrangements undertaken by June 2015 and any recommendations incorporated into annual report to CMT in September 2015. Other focus groups underway by September 2015 and outcomes reported to DRG on a quarterly basis from December 2015.	
To ensure excellence in our approach to disabled staff	Develop guidance for managers on reasonable	Guidance for managers on reasonable adjustments agreed by DRG, HRIG and TUs and rolled out by June 2015.	

	adjustments for disabled staff.	Clarify the Council's approach to medical appointments for disabled staff by end of April 2015	
To achieve excellence in employment and management practice	Undertake an Equal pay audit	Equal pay audit undertaken by end of March 2015 and recommendations reported to DRG by April 2015 with any agreed action underway by May 2015	100% staff are being paid equal pay for work of equal value
	CMT & DMTs to consider equalities and workforce issues on a more regular basis.	Quarterly equalities and HR updates to CMT and DMTs commencing in May 2015.	
	Review equalities data on a regular basis and oversee implementation of HR and equalities action plan.	Quarterly reporting to DRG on a core set of equalities data from September 2015. Quarterly monitoring of the roll out of the HR and equalities action plan by DRG and HRIG, commencing in May 2015. Member monitoring of the Plan through GP Committee beginning September 2015.	
To ensure learning from practice is used to improve performance	Implement a systematic approach to learning from internal discipline, grievance (including bullying and harassment), capability procedures and employment tribunals.	Process for review developed and agreed by HRIG by end of March 2015 and CMT in April. Roll out new review arrangements from May 2015. Monthly case management meetings with HR and Legal commencing April 2015 Ad hoc meetings with relevant director, HR and Legal on Employment Tribunals, commencing April 2015 Regular reports to CMT beginning May 2015	Number of employment and tribunals low against comparator boroughs and success high in employment tribunal outcomes.
	Develop an annual report highlighting the learning from the implementation of the Council's policies on discipline, grievance and capability as well as the learning from employment tribunals	Report on progress quarterly to CMT commencing in May as part of the HR report, including systematic 'by exception' reporting on compliance with policies. Annual analysis on findings of exit interviews to be considered by HRIG in April 2015 and incorporated into HR annual report 2016.	Better employee management practice and stronger understanding of employee perceptions

4	SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE BY BETTER COMMUNICATION AND BY INVOLVEMENT OF ELECTED MEMBERS CMT Lead, Lorraine Langham, Chief Operating Officer		
Objective	Key activities	Progress Milestones	Success criteria
To ensure staff and elected members are aware of the outcomes of the HR and equalities policy review	Review Council's approach to internal communications.	Review of internal communication arrangements undertaken by June 2015 and new strategy implemented from July 2015	Upper quartile satisfaction rates on internal communication in the staff survey.
	Communicate outcome of review and action plan to staff and Members.	Publish action plan on intranet by beginning of May 2015, with references made too in various internal publications such as the Chief Executive's Blog, eSight lite. Action plan on HR and Equalities review to be considered by Scrutiny Committee end of April 2015. Six monthly reporting of progress reported to CMT and GP Committee commencing September 2015.	100% of actions in action plan delivered on time
	Establish a committee of elected members to oversee progress towards the Excellent Standard in the Equalities Framework for Local Government	Establish a committee in May 2015 to review progress towards Excellent in the Equalities Framework for Local Government Meetings held quarterly, commencing in June 2015. Action plan on HR and Equalities review to be considered by Scrutiny Committee end of April 2015.	