

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 9
2 November 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Cllr Ikra Yasin, Chair, Task and Finish Group	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Steve Allen - Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities Councillor Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation	
Contact Officer(s):	Ian Phillips – Head of Communities and Partnerships Integrations	Tel. 07415881802

REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO EXAMINE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY AND ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY BLACK, ASIAN, AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Task and Finish Group	Deadline date: n/a
<p>It is recommended that Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the work that the Task and Finish group has undertaken in assessing the council’s current position on equality, diversity and inclusion using the Local Government Association Framework. 2. Review the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan and provide any further recommendations that the council can take. 3. Formally close the Task and Finish Group and recommend that the newly formed Cabinet Working Group adopt the LGA assessment and action plan as the basis of their work plan. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is referred to the Communities Scrutiny Committee from the Task and Finish group, which was established following two motions raised at Full Council on 21 October 2020.

A motion presented by Cllr Walsh was agreed requesting the formation of a task and finish group to examine issues experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in accessing council services, and a motion presented by Cllr Wiggin was agreed requesting the formation of a task and finish group to examine barriers to equality.

Due to the similarities between these two motions, the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to merge the two motions into a single Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 17 November 2021. The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held on 1 February 2021 at which a merged Terms of Reference were agreed.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The Task and Finish group was established by the former Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2020. The Committee is requested to review and consider endorsing the work of the Task and Finish Group and make any further recommendations.

2.2 This report is for the Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 2. Neighbourhood and Community Support (including cohesion and community safety);
- 3. Equalities

2.3 How does this report link to the Corporate Priorities?

Equality, diversity and inclusion is an essential factor underpinning all of the council's priorities and services.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	n/a
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 At its meeting on 17 November 2020, the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to form a task and finish group to review the issues raised in Cllr Walsh's and Cllr Wiggin's motions as set out in the terms of reference, as follows:

Using a combination of reviewing good practice and learning from elsewhere, discussions with expert witnesses, research, analysis of data, and interviews with councillors, develop proposals that:

- Develop a clear understanding of the findings of these reports (*as referenced in the motion*¹) as they relate to our own BAME communities, to ensure this disproportionality is not experienced in other factors that may affect the health, wellbeing and social mobility of our BAME residents.
- Notes that BAME residents' access to housing, homelessness, welfare support and other relevant services are important parts of the council's remit. The Group to review and recommend concrete actions on how we adopt an actively anti-racist outlook within areas where we have influence by reviewing our corporate policies so that anti-racism is explicit and not implied, and by routinely calling for transparent reporting and continuous monitoring of the impact on the BAME community, alongside any other meaningful statistics that can be monitored regularly.
- Examine key council service data to build an understanding of the ways in which BAME residents are impacted, positively or negatively, by council services.
- Examine the opportunities for our residents provided by the council for improving social mobility, to ensure that our BAME residents enjoy the same levels of access as others.
- Review and examine the City Council structure to ensure ethnic minorities are not disadvantaged. Understand specifically how many BAME staff we employ, where they are working, what barriers, if any, exist to their career progression and whether a "name blind" recruitment process would aid in the recruitment of more BAME staff.
- Review the evidence and provide recommendations to Council and devise a set of KPIs and a challenging outturn for us to achieve this.
- Review provision of services and equality policies and recommend if any amendments are required.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908434/Disparities_in_the_risk_and_outcomes_of_COVID_August_2020_update.pdf
<https://www.adass.org.uk/media/8036/adult-social-care-shaping-a-better-future-nine-statements-220720.pdf>

- Encourage Peterborough schools to include BAME history and culture in lessons, including providing further historical context for events normally only seen through the lens of white British history.
- Review progress on recommendations produced by this group and recommend that the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee monitors future progress.

The Membership of the Group was as follows:

Cllr Ikra Yasin (Chair) - Labour
 Cllr Julie Howell - Green Party
 Cllr Stephen Lane - Werrington First
 Cllr Nicolle Moyo - Conservative
 Bernadetta Omondi (Peterborough Racial Equality Council) - Co-opted Member

4.2 The task and finish group decided to use the Local Government Association equality framework as the basis for its work. The framework is divided into four main sections

1. Understanding and Working with Your Communities
2. Responsive Services and Customer Care
3. Leadership and Organisational Commitment
4. Diverse and Engaged Workforce

The group commissioned services across the council to consider the framework and demonstrate how the council is meeting the criteria and where there is room for further improvement. The completed report is attached at Appendix 1 and provides a robust assessment of the council's current position. The group noted that in many areas, the council could demonstrate a strong approach to equality, some examples being:

- The Business Intelligence team provide a wealth of data about Peterborough that provides information on the age, gender, ethnicity of the population and available across a range of different themes. Data reports are regularly published and publicly available via <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>
- The Think Communities team's engagement with a wide range of community groups helping them to meet local needs of their communities and providing support to tackle city wide problems such as Covid 19. Some examples of the range of groups that the team work with include: the interfaith network, Muslim Council of Peterborough, Joint Mosque Council, the Community Champions Network, the Disability Forum and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community
- The council's Communication's team regularly provide key council messages in a range of languages and translated key documents to ensure that important council messages can be understood by everyone.
- As part of the Safer Peterborough Partnership, the council works closely with partners to monitor community tensions and tackle hate crime, engaging and supporting community leaders to reassure local residents and supporting the police to take enforcement action where appropriate.
- The council regularly undertakes and publishes equality impact assessments when looking to introduce or make changes to council services.

4.3 However, the group also noted that there are a number of areas where the council could make improvements to the way people from diverse backgrounds are supported. As a result, the group have led the production of a detailed action plan (Appendix 2) to highlight areas where more work is required. The action plan follows the same format as the LGA framework and groups actions underneath the four main criteria. Some of the recommendations within the action plan include:

- Development of a strategic communication plan outlining how the council aims to communicate with diverse community groups
- Development of regular forums between the council and community groups to discuss current and future council plans and receive feedback of how these might impact diverse groups
- Review of all council staff policies to ensure that they meet the diverse needs of our workforce
- Development of mandatory staff training on equality and diversity
- Development of a staff equality, diversity and inclusion network

Following the Task and Finish Group's work on the LGA Framework and Action Plan, it is recommended that, subject to any other comments that the committee may have, these documents are passed on to the recently formed Cabinet Working Group on Equality for consideration and progression.

It is also recommended that the task and finish group now be disbanded following the creation of the Cabinet Working Group.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 In preparing the draft Framework and Action Plan for the Task and Finish Group's further development, the Group and its officers consulted with a range of council services and the Peterborough Racial Equality Council.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 The framework and action plan will provide the basis for the Cabinet Working Group to make further improvements to how the council supports individuals and communities with diverse needs.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The task and finish group were requested to review the issues contained within the two council motions and report back to the scrutiny committee. The work contained within the framework and action plan will help to address identified areas for improvement in tackling equality, diversity and inclusion.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 To continue with the work of the task and finish group into reviewing issues surrounding equalities, diversity and inclusion. This has been rejected given that the Cabinet Working Group has now been established.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 None

Legal Implications

- 9.2 None

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 The report and action plan sets out ways in which equality can be improved across a range of services.

Rural Implications

9.4 None

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1
- [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Equality Framework for Local Government](#)
 - [Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 LGA Framework – Appendix 1
Action plan – Appendix 2

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