

Executive**On 23 January 2007**Report Title: **Haringey Housing Diversity and Equalities Strategic Framework**Report of: **Interim Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services**Wards(s) affected: **ALL**Report for: **Key Decision****1. Purpose**

The report asks the Executive Committee to approve the Housing Diversity & Equalities Framework and Action Plan.

2. Introduction by Executive Member (if necessary)

This report marks further progress in the programme of Housing service improvements. The draft Diversity and Equality Framework is an important building block underpinning new services such as the Prevention and Options Service and Home Connections. It builds upon the strong support the Council obtained from the Audit Commission in the 2006 Comprehensive Corporate Assessment. The Diversity and Equality Framework embeds diversity and equality objectives into all areas of Housing Service activity.

It is a statement of our fundamental commitment to valuing diversity and creating opportunity for all residents. The Framework highlights our strong commitment, identifies examples of good practice and sets out what further actions we propose. The Framework has been the subject of extensive consultation and has benefited from that process and from the comments and guidance of the Corporate Equalities Team. This is an important document and will be crucial in helping the Council achieve the two stars in the pending inspection of the ALMO”

3. Recommendations

That the Housing Diversity & Equalities Framework be approved,

That the Action Plan be agreed.

Report Authorised by: **Jim Crook, Interim Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services**Contact Officer: **Hitesh Tailor, Interim Housing Partnerships Manager**

4. Director of Finance Comments

There are no direct financial implications from approving the Framework. Any cost of printing will need to be contained within the existing Housing Budget.

There may be some resource implications (not quantified at present) if the Action Plan suggests any change in the processes of providing homelessness needs.

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

The development and implementation of the Framework and associated Action Plan will assist the Council in complying with its equalities duties as a public authority and a service provider. In particular it will assist the Council in meeting the requirements to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination inherent in its duties as a public authority under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976, Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Section 76A of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. In addition the Framework will also assist compliance with the general duties concerning the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and on the grounds of sexual orientation introduced by the Equalities Act 2006.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Haringey Housing Strategy 2003-08

Draft Housing Needs Survey 2006

Association of London Government (ALG) Black and minority ethnic housing strategy guidelines for London

Housing Corporation Equality & Diversity Policy & Strategies

Experience Counts: Haringey's Strategy for improving the quality of life for older people 2005-2010

Haringey Council: "Housing And Diversity In Haringey - Consultation With The Race Equality Joint Consultative Committee."(REJCC)

Haringey Council Equal Opportunities Policy - achieving equality; respecting diversity

Haringey Council Scrutiny Services : Report of the Scrutiny Review of Adaptations

Haringey Council, 'Shaping the Future'. Draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016.

7. Strategic Implications

The Diversity & Equalities Framework is an important document setting out the Council's commitment to achieving equality in housing for all residents and communities. The Framework gives added focus to the diversity and equalities issues identified in the Housing Strategy. It is structured around the needs of the six equality groups:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Religion and Belief
- Sexuality

The Framework sets out the aims and objectives that will ensure housing services across all tenures contribute to the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy vision of making Haringey a place where ***"people want to be."***

It also reflects the Housing Strategy vision of ***"Meeting the borough's current and future housing needs-and through doing so, making a major contribution to social inclusion and the socio economic well-being of Haringey."***

The Framework includes an Action Plan that will guide the work of the Council's Strategic Housing Service in implementing the aims and objectives and proposed actions.

8. Financial Implications

The implementation of the Framework will be resourced from existing resources. Actions that require additional resources will be considered by the Social Services and Housing Departmental Management Team (DMT)

9. Equalities Implications

The proposed Framework is an important tool that aims to highlight the difficulties communities within Haringey face in obtaining and maintaining housing. It sets a direction of travel underpinned by the Action Plan that will deliver the Framework.

The Framework aims to ensure that housing across all tenures is accessible to all residents facing housing need. It further seeks to ensure that housing services, regardless of the provider of such services, meet the diversity and equality aims and objectives of the Framework.

10. Consultation

The Framework has been developed following consultation with housing providers and community groups that represent the various communities within Haringey. All the main Haringey Strategic Partnership forums were contacted, along with housing associations, and over 100 community organisations. The consultation included a survey form, a focus group presentation to Turkish and Somali tenant groups, and to the Older Person Forum, and individual interviews / meetings with various organisations.

The main survey form sought views on the intended aims of the Framework; what were the key issues contributing to housing inequality; suggestions for improving access to affordable housing and improving service provisions.

The Framework and Action Plan that will allow Haringey's Strategic Housing Service to develop close and effective working with partners and organisations across all tenures.

11. Background

The Housing Strategy highlighted the diversity and equalities challenges arising from meeting local housing needs and related objectives and policies. The Diversity and Equalities Housing Framework sets out current practice including examples of best practice. It identifies actions to develop an excellent housing service. This would help in attaining a two stars in a future Audit Commission inspection and further build upon the progress identified in the Corporate Performance Assessment on diversity and equality.

The focus of this Diversity & Equalities Framework has been to highlight the difficulties residents face accessing affordable housing solutions, and in achieving a good quality of life through responsive services within Haringey across all tenures.

Haringey Council has a proactive and positive approach to equalities work. Much of this has diversity at the forefront given the make up of the Borough and its residents. It is imperative to document the inequality experienced by Haringey's residents and to develop housing policies and services, across all tenures, that will in the long term address inequalities and eliminate discrimination.

12. Aims of the Framework

The Framework proposes actions to meet the following aims. To:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, gender, sexuality, religion / belief, and age.
- Promote equal opportunities for all groups in the community
- Deliver high standard services to people from economic and socially disadvantaged communities and are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture
- Promote community cohesion within Haringey by recognising the diversity of local communities and fostering good relations between them

The Framework has identified four objectives to ensure the Action Plan reflects the overall aims.

13. The Four objectives of the Framework:

- Develop greater understanding of community housing needs and improve services to residents across the tenures
- Work with partners to maximise the supply of affordable homes, increasing access and housing choice
- Improve community safety, sustainability and cohesion in our most deprived communities and create opportunities for people to achieve and succeed
- Eliminate discrimination in the provision of our services by developing effective performance information and monitoring of housing services

14. Wider Influences upon the Framework

Developing a cross tenure Diversity & Equalities Housing Framework reflects the following local drivers. The:

- Draft Community Strategy 2007-16
- Housing Strategy 2003-08
- Supporting People Strategy
- Experience Counts – Older Persons Strategy
- Children & Young People Strategy

There were also a number of national drivers. The:

- Sustainable Communities Plan
- London Housing Strategy.

The Diversity and Equality Framework takes account of equalities legislation and guidance including the CRE code of Practice and key performance indicators which the authority must adhere to.

15. Delivering Equal Opportunities in Haringey

Haringey Council has a commitment to reflecting the diversity of the community it serves and to promoting equal opportunity through its Equal Opportunities Policy.

Haringey Council also has a Race Equality Scheme with requirements to develop Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) for each policy and strategy the council develops. This Framework has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

The Council also introduced a Disability Equality Scheme and will introduce a Gender Equality scheme before March 2007.

The Council is also aiming to achieve Levels 3 and 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

16. Conclusion

This report asks the Executive Committee to approve the Housing Diversity & Equalities Framework and agree the Action Plan.

The Framework sets out the Housing Services' record of initiatives and activities across the six equality groups. Within the Framework and summarised in the Action Plan is the actions that we propose to take to meet the aims and objectives set out in the Framework. It reflects the Council's vision and sets out what we expect from all providers of housing and housing services.

It further sets out how the needs of residents in all tenures will be met. The Framework will be a key document underpinning the Housing Strategy of the Council.

17. Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs

The Housing Diversity & Equalities Framework is attached. Part of the Framework includes 5 annexes:

Annexe A	Legislation
Annexe B	Strategies
Annexe C	Consultation
Annexe D	Action Plan
Annexe E	Organisations