

Report for: Cabinet – 17 July 2018

Title: Haringey Fairness Commission

Report authorised by: Zina Etheridge, Chief Executive

Lead Officer: Erica Ballmann, Assistant Director – Strategy & Communications

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Non-key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

The current Council leadership made a commitment during the recent election campaign to establish a Fairness Commission. This report and recommendations within it set out to establish that Commission and outline the early activity that will be undertaken.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

During the recent election campaign, our manifesto included a key commitment to establish a Fairness Commission. The central aim of our commission is to make Haringey a fairer borough for our residents, our many diverse communities and our businesses. Eight years of continuous cuts and government austerity has had a huge impact on our council's ability to meet local needs. Valued services have been affected and the Council has had to make some very difficult decisions. But, despite this, the Council can still set priorities, establish policies and use its resources to tackle inequality.

Our overarching aim is to improve the quality of life in Haringey by making it a fairer place for all who live and work in it. Our Commission will conduct a detailed and wide-ranging enquiry, inviting residents, community groups, partners, experts and businesses to share their experiences, ideas, and knowledge. Through listening, dialogue and discussion this collective information will assist our Commissioners in agreeing a set of recommendations and proposals for what we should do to make Haringey a fairer and more equal borough.

The Commissioners invited to participate in this project are drawn largely from our local communities. They bring vast skills from many different perspectives and it is our intention that they are themselves representative of the borough's diversity. They will join our key partners and myself.

Involving fellow councillors is central to the success of the Commission. As decision makers, and elected representatives, it is important that councillors hear the stories, experiences and professional perspectives to shape recommendations on how the Council can use its powers and resources to impact on, and mitigate inequality. I am proposing that there will be a cross-

party Member reference group that will help shape the work of the Commission and that some backbench Councillors, including the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny are Commissioners.

Ultimately, it is our aim to ensure Haringey becomes a fairer and equal borough, and this Commission, along with the involvement and participation of our partners and our communities, will help us set out how we intend to achieve this goal.

3. Recommendations

That the Cabinet:

- a) Agrees that the Haringey Fairness Commission is established;
- b) Agrees the appointment of Cllr Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Civic Services, and Dr Paul Watt, Professor of Urban Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, as Co-Chairs of the Commission;
- c) Notes the range of partners and stakeholders who have been approached to join as Commissioners;
- d) Notes that the Commission will conduct a range of evidence and public engagement sessions between October 2018 – March 2019, with a view to publishing a final report and set of recommendations in summer 2019.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 This report and recommendations seek to establish the Haringey Fairness Commission. The Commission will aim to hear from a wide range of residents, stakeholders, partners and experts with a view to publishing a final report setting out their findings and recommendations in summer 2019.

4.2 The recommendations are intended to be practical, setting out how the Council and its partners can tackle issues of inequality and fairness that are highlighted through the evidence sessions and public engagement that is planned to take place.

5. Background information

5.1 The 2018-2022 Council leadership made a manifesto commitment during the recent election campaign to establish a Fairness Commission. This report sets out process for implementing this and outlines the early activity that will be undertaken.

5.2 The Fairness Commission will be co-chaired by Councillor Zena Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Civic Services and Dr Paul Watt, Professor of Urban Studies at Birkbeck, University of London.

5.3 Up to 20 Commissioners have been invited to oversee the Commission. The Commissioners draw on the skills and expertise of those living and working within the Borough and most live locally so experience Haringey as service recipients, customers and taxpayers. They include representatives from statutory partners, community and faith organisations, our local Members of Parliament and councillors. Subject matter experts with strong connections to the Borough have also been invited to participate. The Commissioners also reflect the diversity of the Borough. They should be able to facilitate access to a wide range of different communities and stakeholders, but they have been invited to participate on the

basis of their skills and experience, rather than as representatives of any particular group.

5.4 The Commission aims to hear from a wide range of residents, stakeholders, partners and experts with a view to publishing a final report setting out their findings and recommendations in summer 2019.

5.5 The Commission's recommendations are intended to be practical, setting out how the Council and its partners can tackle issues of inequality and fairness that are highlighted through the evidence sessions and public engagement that is planned to take place.

5.6 The Commission will focus on a number of themes, all of which will have a clear link to reducing inequality. Commissioners will be divided into sub-groups based on their expertise and interests. These themes are areas of inequality that are particular to Haringey identified through our own data and relevant areas of concern that have been highlighted in the recent resident survey (April 2018). They also draw on the experiences of Fairness Commissions undertaken in other Local Authorities.

5.7 Themes

Themes identified so far – not at this stage intended to be an exhaustive list – are:

- Jobs and Employment
 - The availability, quality and sustainability of jobs
 - Career Progression into higher paid roles
 - Low wages and pay ratios
- Finance
 - Debt, access to credit and support services
 - Rising household costs
 - Availability and affordability of childcare
 - Inequality in asset base
 - Benefits and impact of welfare reform
- Communities and neighbourhoods
 - The local environment and sense of safety and security
 - Integration into the local community and a sense of belonging and/or having strong social networks and connections
 - Access to sport, leisure and culture facilities
 - Access to information/feeling informed/being engaged
- Housing
 - Supply, affordability, sustainability and quality of housing

- Health and wellbeing
 - Including mental and physical health, adult social care and issues of social isolation, disability
- Children and Education
 - Child Poverty
 - Children’s mental health and wellbeing
 - Educational attainment, exclusions and school place allocation
 - Inclusion

These themes are still being refined and developed, and can be taken, at this point, to be indicative

5.8 Phases

It is proposed that the Commission will work through three phases of activity:

- July – September 2018: **Set up and defining scope**
 - The Commission will be launched; the Commissioners will be invited to join; and there will be an initial call for views and comments via Fairness Commission webpages;
 - Desk-based research will be undertaken to further develop an evidence base and further define/refine the themes that the Commission will investigate;
 - Terms of reference will be drafted and formalised
 - There will be a Member reference group which will meet regularly from the outset; and
 - CAB will engage again to shape the themes and approach to resident engagement.
- October 2018 – April 2019: **Engagement and evidence-gathering**
 - The Commission will hear directly from expert witnesses in relation to each theme;
 - There will be a range of public engagement events taking place; and
 - Comments and submission of evidence in response to each of the themes will be invited.
- April – June 2019: **Report and recommendations**
 - The final report and recommendations will be drafted which will need to be tested with key stakeholder groups including the Member reference group and will need to be agreed by the Commissioners;
 - The intention is to publish the final report in summer 2019. The Council will then need to decide how to respond to those recommendations and make changes to policy aims, and strategy and delivery objectives where that is required.

6. Engagement with residents

Engagement with residents is at the heart of the Fairness Commission and will be integral to its success and the aim is to reach as many people as possible through as

many diverse routes as possible. Engagement will proactively seek to listen to the life experiences and ideas of those that may be marginalised from mainstream society and whose voices are harder to hear, for example a focus on engaging with young people. The Commission will employ a range of different engagement tools and will focus on listening to the lived experiences of residents in relation to government and local authority policies. More detailed engagement plans will be shared on dedicated web pages for the Commission, launched following Cabinet approval to proceed.

7. Statutory Officers comments

Finance

The scope of the Fairness Commission means that it may provide comments and views on a wide range of activities and issues in which the Council is involved. The potential financial implications of the Council's response to these will be considered at that time. It is expected that a level of funding will be required to support the Commission in its activities. This will become clearer as the work programme for the Commission is further scoped and is not expected to be significant, so it will be addressed under officer delegations.

8. Legal

The Assistant Director, Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.

Confirmation can be given of the fact that Cabinet has the Constitutional authority to agree the Recommendations in this report, with reliance being placed on the Policy and Local Community Leadership and the Committees of the Executive parts of Part Three, Section 2 of the Constitution in relation to Recommendations (a) and (b).

Confirmation can also be given that notwithstanding the fact that all Wards are affected by the decision to set up a Fairness Commission, that of itself is not sufficiently significant so as to trigger the test for a decision to become key in these circumstances. That said, it is likely that recommendations made by the Commission will be matters for Cabinet to decide upon, and could trigger the test for a key decision at that stage.

9. Equality

The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not

- c. Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Given this decision is to establish the Haringey Fairness Commission, there are no immediate equalities considerations. That said, every effort needs to be made to ensure that the engagement phase of the Commission's work is as inclusive and accessible as is possible.

Any changes to the Council's strategy or delivery objectives that are made as a result of the Commission's recommendations (due in summer 2019) will need to be given due consideration for any equalities impacts at that time.