

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET15 September 2016Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveINTERIM PROGRESS UPDATE ON DELIVERING OUR EQUALITIES AGENDA AND
FULFILLING OUR EQUALITY DUTIES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presents an update on progress to deliver the Council's equalities agenda and fulfil its equality outcomes, agreed in April 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- (a) Notes the progress made in the past year in delivering the Council's equality agenda and fulfilling our equality duties; and
 - (b) Continues to ensure Elected Member scrutiny of all Council actions for their equality impacts.

BACKGROUND**Our Equality Outcomes**

3. On 22 April 2015, the Council considered and approved a report entitled, "Fulfilling Our Equality Duties: Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2013-2017". In that report the Council's original 9 equality outcomes were revised to 8 equality outcomes aimed at a range of equality groups.

4. As part of the process of the work which led to the revised Equality Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes report, investigations to gather information on our work since 2013, showed that, more effort was required to pursue outcomes associated with;

- Improving equality evidence-gathering and usage, including evidence gathered through HR processes, service delivery, national research, equality-impact assessments and other community engagement processes;
- Improving facilities for and relations with Gypsy Travellers;
- Improving our engagement with LGBT communities;
- Assisting Community Councils to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve;

- Developing a strong multi-agency partnership against harassment and hate crime.
- Ensuring that more of our employees, councillors and community advocates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to work for fairness and equality.

5. On 4 March 2015 the Council's "Bridges to Change Equality Conference" took place to review progress in fulfilling our equality public duties since April 2013. Progress in a number of areas was acknowledged including:

- Improvements in attainment levels for S4 boys and pupils from Asian-Pakistani backgrounds;
- The development and implementation of inter-generational activities relations which are encouraging the sharing of knowledge, reducing isolation, enhancing good relations between different age-groups and improving the wellbeing of all; and
- The Council's inclusive approach to consulting on the budget savings process in 2014/15.

6. Community participants at the conference also proposed further actions for the Council to pursue in a number of areas, including:

- Further promoting disability equality through measures such as increasing the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis; increasing the representation of disabled people in decision-making structures such as the Citizen's Panel; and more effective support to improve the prospects of disabled people, including people with learning difficulties, in the labour market.
- Delivering services to meet the diverse needs of the growing older population.
- Becoming more inclusive of young people by involving them in decision-making and investing in more facilities to meet their needs.
- Further pursuing racial equality through measures such as providing community language teaching in schools; and providing culturally-sensitive swimming opportunities.

7. The Council's current wider equalities agenda is, reflected through the key strategic plans of the Council, including the 8 equality outcomes, our 5 SOA outcomes and associated intermediate outcomes relating to young people, adults and older people as well as the improvement actions identified in this report. An Interim Progress Update Report is attached as Annex 1 for the Cabinet's Consideration. A full Progress Update Report is due in Spring 2017.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

8. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Departments will continue to work together with communities, sharing resources where required, to fulfil the Council's equality agenda.

CONSULTATION

9. This report is the result of consulting with:
- Departmental Equality Officers on progress in fulfilling their departments' equality commitments; and
 - Representatives of East Renfrewshire Disability Action and Diversity ER as part of our asset-based Community Capacity-Building project for these two local equality umbrella organisations.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

10. The report highlights the continuing partnership between the Council, HSCP, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust and local people, including equality groups such as East Renfrewshire Disability Action and Diversity ER.

EQUALITY

11. Progress in fulfilling our equalities agenda is enabling the fulfilment of the three needs of the Council's Statutory Equality duties under the Equality Act (2010), namely, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. There are no specific implications for property, staffing, IT, legal services or sustainability.

CONCLUSION

13. This report shows that steady progress has been made towards making East Renfrewshire a place where all are included and no one is disadvantaged or left behind, a continued focus on equality is required by all to maintain progress in the coming years. More work is required especially in Improving equality evidence-gathering and usage; conducting Equality Impact Assessments and improving facilities for and relations with Gypsy Travellers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- (a) Notes the progress made in the past year in delivering the Council's equality agenda and fulfilling our equality duties; and
 - (b) Continues to ensure Elected Member scrutiny of all Council actions for their equality impacts.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: “Fulfilling Our Equality Specific Duties: Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes”

KEY WORDS; “Equality”; “Outcomes”; “Mainstreaming”; “Duties”.

Annex 1: Interim Equality Progress Update Report - 2016

A: Progress Update on Equality Outcomes

Equality Outcome – 1. Disabled people are protected from physical and communication barriers.

Protected Characteristic(s): Disability
SOA Outcomes: SOA 3

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes: Customer

Intermediate Outcomes

1.1 Wheelchair users are confident that they can hire a wheelchair-accessible taxi at a fair cost when they need one. (SOA 3.5)

In March 2015, the Licensing Committee took a decision to incentivise licence holders to operate wheelchair accessible vehicles by introducing free licence applications for anyone providing this type of vehicle. This was introduced as an alternative to any compulsory measures.

We presently have one wheelchair accessible taxi out of 58 taxis (1.7%) and two wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles out of 435 total vehicles (0.4%). These numbers are comparable with figures between zero and three, respectively, for this time last year.

It is envisaged that the recent revision of the tendering conditions for the conveyance of School Children with additional support needs and/or medical needs and escorts Taxi/Private Hire Services to award more points to tenderers with accessible vehicles will encourage more tenderers to acquire accessible vehicles. In addition, while the age limit of contracted vehicles is 10 years, the limit for accessible vehicles has been increased to 12 years.

1.2 New houses built in East Renfrewshire are suitable for disabled people and older people (SOA3.2) - Environment

All new houses built in East Renfrewshire approved since the 2010 Building Scotland Act cater for a variety of particular needs including disabled needs and access to houses.

- Adaptations Services – Housing Services will undertake adaptations to residents' homes to allow them to live independently. This is a joint project with HSCP who undertake the required occupational therapy assessments
- Care and repair services - Care & Repair Renfrewshire provides free and confidential advice and practical assistance to people who are older or have disabilities and live in Renfrewshire or East Renfrewshire. The aim is to enable repairs and adaptations to be carried out to allow our clients to maintain their independence and remain in their own homes comfortably, safely and securely.
- Private Sector Housing Officer – this officer works with residents in the private sector who are older or may have disabilities to assist them to remain in their current home or find alternative suitable accommodation.

With regards to new developments Housing Services ensure that all new developments have a proportion of properties adapted to particular needs

1.3 Wheelchair users find it easy to access pavements in East Renfrewshire. SOA 3.5) – Environment

The Roads service, when planning to undertake junction improvements will assess each location for the requirement and suitability to install dropped kerbs and will undertake these works as the opportunity arises. During the last year, the service has also undertaken eleven pavement resurfacing schemes to assist pedestrians and wheelchair users. Over the last six years, the service has also accessed funds from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to allow raised kerbs to be installed at approximately two hundred bus stops (50% of our total) providing easy access to public transport for passengers including wheelchair users.

1.4 Disabled people receive information from the Council in accessible formats SOA 3
- Corporate and Community Services

Our disabled residents can receive information in various formats from Large Print, Braille etc. with many visually impaired residents preferring to be contacted by e-mail as they have the voice recognition software. The recent launch of our Live Chat facility has also improved access to our website for disabled residents. The improvements include accessing Facebook and Twitter and the web content being designed to be accessible for users of assistive technology.

Equality Outcome – 2. Attainment levels for our young people with the lowest attainment records have improved

Protected Characteristic(s):Age

SOA Outcomes: SOA 1, SOA 2, SOA

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes:

Intermediate Outcomes

2.1 Levels of attainment for pupils from Asian-Pakistani backgrounds have improved. (SOA1.4 /SOA 2.1) – Education

92.35% Asian-Pakistani pupils achieved National 5 in Literacy in the 2015 SQA results and 87.24% of them achieved National 5 in Numeracy. These figures are much higher than in any other local authority and do show an increased attainment for both groups over a 3 year period and exceed the targets set for these groups

2.2 Levels of attainment for boys have improved. (Education Department). (SOA1.4/SOA2.1)
- Education

89.6% of boys achieved National 5 in Literacy in the 2015 SQA results and 84.33% of them group achieved National 5 in Numeracy. Again, these figures are much higher than in any other local authority and do show an increased attainment for both groups over a 3 year period and exceed the targets set for these groups.

Equality Outcome –3. The relations between different groups in East Renfrewshire are strong

Protected Characteristic(s): Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership.

SOA Outcomes: SOA 3, SOA 4, SOA 5

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes:

Intermediate Outcomes

3.1 Young people and older people are engaged together in activities. (SOA 5.2) – Corporate and Community Services

Our Youth Services Team is supporting an intergenerational project where young people and older people come together for a quiz in November.

3.2 There are good relations among young people from different faith groups. (SOA 3.3) – Corporate and Community Services

Young people from different faiths are involved in programmes run by Young Persons Services e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, youth clubs, East Ren challenge

3.3 Gypsy Travellers feel welcomed by local people in East Renfrewshire. (SOA 3.3) – Environment

No opportunities have arisen during the last year to engage with gypsy travellers.

3.4 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people have healthy relationships with faith communities in East Renfrewshire (SOA 3.3/SOA 4.3) – Corporate and Community Services

Our Young Persons Services Team has established a LGBT forum. It is envisaged that arrangements to coordinate liaison between that Forum and East Renfrewshire Faith forum would be initiated by 2017.

Equality Outcome – 4. We have strong and active equality community organisations and their members are active citizens and effective contributors to civic life in East Renfrewshire

Protected Characteristic(s): Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership.

SOA Outcomes: SOA 1, SOA 3, SOA 4, SOA 5

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes:

Intermediate Outcomes

4.1 Young people are actively engaged in local decision-making. (SOA 3.3) – Corporate and Community Services

Our Young Persons Services Team supports the 3 locally-elected members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the local youth forum, tackling issues and concerns that young people have in our local area. Some of the concerns include transport across the authority, free or low cost leisure facilities, and campaigning for better services to support young people with mental health issues.

4.2 Opportunities for parental involvement in Equalities issues have increased. (SOA 3.3) - Education

The Parent Equalities Forum meets x3 per session and numbers attending have increased due to approaches to encourage a wider audience. A number of schools have also been increasing their engagement opportunities with their own parent group and equalities is regularly an agenda item at parent council meetings.

4.3 Members of equality groups actively participate in our Citizens' Panel to inform partnership and Council policies. (SOA 3.3) – Corporate and Community Services

In 2015/16, 3% of Citizens' Panel respondents came from minority ethnic communities. This is proportionately an underrepresentation of the minority ethnic community in East Renfrewshire which is 6%. However, we need to be cautious due to the low numbers involved. While 3% was higher than the response rate for the 2 previous years, the actual number of minority ethnic respondents was marginally lower. A refresh of the Citizens' Panel is due to take place next year and the situation will be highlighted to the consultants carrying out that exercise.

4.4 Representatives of local equality community organisations are confident that they are influencing service design and delivery. (SOA 3.3) – Corporate and Community Services

42.86% of core reps or office bearers of ERDA and Diversity ER surveyed in April 2016 reported being confident that they are influencing service design and delivery. The figure for the 2015 was 50%. The reduction in satisfaction largely reflects dissatisfaction among ERDA members with the Council regarding progress with accessible taxis.

4.5 Disabled people and their carers have choice and control over the care and support services they need to live their lives the way they want to. (SOA 1.3, SOA/SOA 4.4/SOA 5.1) – HSCP

The number of people self-directing their support has continued to increase during 2015/16 rising to 384 at mid-year from 279 at year end 2014/15. 124 people with learning disability have redesigned care and support packages with clear expressions of individual choice being agreed and the relevant Self Directed Support route being followed.

4.6 Disabled people's groups are involved in giving support to disabled people when there are big changes in disabled persons' lives. (SOA 3.3) – Corporate and Community Services

70% of core reps or office bearers of ERDA and Diversity ER surveyed in April 2016 reported agreed that disabled people's groups are involved in giving support to disabled people when there are big changes in disabled persons' lives.

Equality Outcome – 5. Members of equality groups live their lives, safe from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and violence

Protected Characteristic(s): Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership.

SOA Outcomes: SOA 3, SOA 4

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes: Customer

Intermediate Outcomes

5.1 Victims of identity-based harassment and violence are satisfied with the support they receive. (SOA 4.3) – Corporate and Community Services

There were 45 reported hate crime incidents from January to December 2015. 43 of them were dealt with satisfactorily and 2 were not resolved.

5.2 Levels of identity-based bullying and harassment in schools have reduced. (SOA 4.3) – Education

Levels remain low across all sectors and schools/establishments are asked to report to the education department annually on incidents and alleged incidents recorded. Work has been carried out with equalities coordinators around dealing with incidents as appropriate. The Education Department has been working this session with partner organisations to support young people with issues relating to sexual identity

5.3 Victims of domestic violence have confidence in our mechanisms for addressing repeat violence against women. (SOA 4.3) – HSCP

The Domestic Abuse Service has been operational for two years with considerable development progressed to ensure that the appropriate support is available and accessible to women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Partnership working across the Domestic Abuse Task Force, Police Scotland and Request for Assistance Team continues.

ERDAP supported 169 women, children and young people during the third quarter across our range of wrap around services - drop in and help line, outreach service for women, refuge service and therapeutic support to children and young people. The demand for services continues with 43 new referrals. An 11% increase in referrals over each quarter has been noted in the current year. 48% of referrals came from partner agencies indicating a good level of awareness of services available.

There was a marked increase in safety, accommodation and support networks for families engaged in ERDAP services and service users indicated that their self-esteem and confidence had greatly improved along with issues relating to money, legal issues and children.

5.4 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people see East Renfrewshire as a safe place to live and work. (SOA 3.3/SOA 4.3) – [Corporate and Community Services](#)

The Young Person's Services team has started a new youth group for young people aged 12+ who identify as being LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex). This is a brand new group, where young people will be involved in deciding what the focus of the group will be. This has been identified by young people as something needed in the area. This group has been meeting in the Museum Youth Facility, Barrhead Main Street on Monday evenings 7-9pm from the 29th February

Equality Outcome – 6. All equality groups live active, connected and healthy lives

Protected Characteristic(s): Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership.

SOA Outcomes: SOA 1, SOA 2, SOA 3, SOA 5

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes: Customer

Intermediate Outcomes

6.1 Our older people live active, engaged and healthy and lives.. (SOA 5.2/SOA 2,3) – HSCP

Citizen panel respondents generally felt that their community supports older people; around two thirds indicated this (65%) and only 9% disagreed.

A range of programmes that are co-produced with local people have been developed across the authority.

Men's Shed - based in Barrhead this project gives local people a place to socialise and a workshop to undertake community and personal projects e.g. woodworking

Chair Based Exercise (Barrhead Foundry and Newton Mearns). These groups deliver seated exercise to improve strength and balance to build confidence in older people to participate in exercise.

Chair based exercise pilot with Wise Connections - this group from Neilston supports people to improve their mental health through group work and physical activity

Walking programme - walking groups developed across the authority area - local people trained as walk leaders to run their own groups.

Long term conditions group - a peer support group to support people to self-manage their condition(s)

'Give it a Grow' based at the Waterworks in Barrhead - local people volunteer to set up a small community garden

Stride (activity group for older adults) aims to keep people active and a programme devised by the group themselves looks at a range of topics e.g. money advice, reducing stress,

Memory Lane dementia peer support group, run by volunteers this group provides a local drop in for people with dementia and their carers.

A new group in Busby is being piloted for older adults

6.2 Local residents with protected characteristics make regular use of sporting and cultural facilities and services. (SOA 2.4) – ERLT

In 2015/16, in terms of ethnicity, Black and Minority Ethnic customers made up:

- 6.5% of participants accessing sports activities and facilities
- 7.6% of active library members (i.e. people who borrowed an item in 2015/16)

These figures point towards a representation of minority ethnic uptake of these services which is slightly above the 6% of minority ethnic population of East Renfrewshire.

The disabled swimming lesson programme piloted in 2012/13, targeting participants with physical disabilities or special learning needs, increased by 16% (+40 participants) in 2015/16.

ERCL's Library Service piloted the use of Citizen Space for its 2015 bi-annual customer survey to track feedback by protected characteristics. This flagged up a small number of areas for further study. Similar exercises will be conducted across other ERCL services in 2016/17.

6.3 Minority ethnic communities have access to local social cultural and religious facilities. (SOA 3.3) – ERCLT

The Corporate Equality Unit supported Diversity ER to research the culturally-sensitive swimming needs of minority communities and presented a report to the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust. This led to a pilot project in which 68 minority ethnic women participated. The Trust is currently making arrangements to meet the needs identified during the project.

In 2015/16, Black & Minority Ethnic customers made up 3.1% of non-sports attendances in halls and schools (out of hours) cf to 6% in the East Renfrewshire population.

6.4 Children and young people's participation in sports activities has increased. (SOA1.2/SOA 2.4) - ERCLT

3,480 young people took part in sporting activities in Secondary schools at least once a week during 2014/2015, not including participation in P.E.

5,142 children took part in sporting activities in Primary schools at least once a week during 2014/2015, not including participation in P.E. Data for 2015/16 is not yet available to enable comparison.

Equality Outcome – 7. Our employees and Councillors are confident in their ability to play their part in maintaining East Renfrewshire as a place where nobody is left behind

Protected Characteristic(s): Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage/Civil Partnership.

SOA Outcomes:

Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes: People

Intermediate Outcomes

7.1 Our employees are confident in their ability to respond to the needs of colleagues and citizens. (People) – [Corporate and Community Services](#)

The Council offers a range of equality and diversity based training to all employees through our corporate training calendar. In 2015 /2016, the type of courses covered disability awareness to religious and anti-discrimination training. A new type of course was piloted this year under the heading Dignity at Work. This offered two options, a two day course called Dignity at Work Awareness & Effect on Organisations and a half day Dignity at Work awareness course. These courses are aimed at changing workplace behaviour and culture and had 19 participants in 2015/16.

7.2 Our decision-makers are aware of the implications of the general equality duty when making decisions about the council's policies and practices. (People) – [Corporate and Community Services](#)

To some extent, proposed budgetary decisions are being considered with regards to their likely equality impacts. The budget savings template has been redesigned to ensure greater equality scrutiny. Departments are being encouraged to make equality impact assessments more a routine feature of their policy making process.

Equality Outcome – 8. Members of equality groups currently under-represented in the Council’s workforce have positive employment experiences and career prospects

Protected Characteristic(s): Disability, Race, Sex,.

SOA Outcomes: SOA 1, SOA 2,
Customer, Efficiency and People Outcomes: People

Intermediate Outcomes

8.1 We have identified and are tackling barriers to employment opportunities in the Council for under-represented groups. (SOA 2.3) (People) – Environment [Work EastRen](#), the Council’s employability services, offer a wide range of employability support and interventions which are focused on those furthest removed from the labour market. These are:

Core Work EastRen activity

Registrations	447		
Female	189		
Male	258		
		(F)	(M)
16-24	56		105
25-39	58		65
40-49	40		30
50+	35		58
Disability	4 Female		8 Male
Black African	2		
Chinese	3		
Eastern European	5		
Indian	8		
Other	14		
Pakistani	15		
White	399		
Unknown	1		

The Working Matters Employability Programme, a Clyde Valley City Deal ESA support programme, designed to assist people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and have undertaken a period of support through the Work Programme (WP).to develop a strategy and the relevant skills to secure sustained employment and to become resilient within the labour market. Equalities data for the Working Matters programme is broken down as follows

Male	6
Female	4
Disability	6
White	10

The Employability Fund, which brings together earlier National Training Programmes (Get Ready for Work, Life Skills, Training for Work, Targeted Pathways to Apprenticeships and the New College Learning Programme) to provide a more flexible, outcome-focused provision for unemployed people across Scotland. Priority groups include statutory school leavers aged 17 and under who are not in education, employment or training; those aged 18 and over who are in receipt of DWP benefit and have been unemployed for a period of 13 weeks or more; those under threat of redundancy and are within 13 weeks of their notified date of redundancy. For the 2015/16 Employability Fund programme equalities data can be broken as follows:

Male	6
Female	5
Disability	None
White	11
16-24	11

Modern Apprenticeship Programme – as a service provider, Work EastRen delivers and manages the Modern Apprenticeship programme from Skills Development Scotland. Work EastRen were awarded 19 places for 2016/17 with recruitment expected to be complete by mid-August. For the 2015/16 Modern Apprentice Programme equalities data can be broken as follows:

Male	12
Female	15
Disability	None
Indian	1
White	26
16-24	27

Family Firm Pre-Employability Programme - We have targeted 10 care experienced young people for the pre-employment programme but not all will engage (hoping to engage half). All are currently unemployed and either in foster care, kinship care, living independently or in supported accommodation therefore have multiple barriers to accessing employment. At least half of the 10 have either no or limited qualifications. The programme will commence in mid-June 2016 and as such no equalities data will be available until the end of June.

SERI (Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive) – We administer SERI on behalf of Skills Development Scotland and it provides targeted support to unemployed young people. The aim is to get young people into a job and keep them employed. During 2015/2016 20 young people were supported by this initiative and the equalities data can be broken down as follows:

Male	16
Female	4
Disability	1
White Scottish	15
Indian	1
Asian	1
Prefer not to say	2
16-24	20

8.2 Employees with protected characteristics feel more supported in the workplace. (People) – Corporate and Community Services

The Council continues to use a range of approaches to support those employees with protected characteristics. We continue to develop our flexible working and special leave policy options to support those employees who need flexibility within their working pattern, with our Maximising Attendance policy and Occupational Health measures available to give more direct support. Our counselling service, Time for Talking is available for employees to use outside the workplace when needed. For those occasions when an employee needs to take informal/formal action in respect of complaints or grievances, policies exist for them to use and there is always input from the HR team to offer support.

8.3 Our looked-after children are supported to participate in work experience programmes. ((SOA 1.4) – Environment The Family Firm Coordinator has been in place since March 2016. A new employability project is being developed which will be solely focused on the Family Firm cohort. This will be funded via the CPP Employability pipeline programme which will commence in June 2016 and ends in December 2020 subject to budgets being approved. Please see 8.1

8.4 Disabled and young people with learning difficulties have access to work experience and jobs. (SOA 2.1/SOA 2.2) – Environment Although there is no specific programme targeted on disabled and young people with learning difficulties this cohort has access to all work experience placements and job opportunities advertised via Work EastRen. Work EastRen are actively involved in promoting and progressing the Developing the Young Workforce and Youth Employment Activity Plan agenda with Education Department which will encompass working disabled and young people with learning difficulties have access to work experience and jobs. Where no ERC provision exists we will signpost clients to other provision in East Renfrewshire such as ENABLE. Through Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive one young person with a disability has moved into employment.

B: Progress Update on Improvement Actions

Improving our engagement with LGBT communities

1. Our Young Person's Services team has started a new youth group for young people aged 12+ who identify as being LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex). This is a brand new group, where young people will be involved in deciding what the focus of the group will be. This has been identified by young people as something needed in the area. This group has been meeting in the Museum Youth Facility, Barrhead Main Street since 29th February 2016.

Assisting Community Councils to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve

2. Concerned about the under-representation of minority ethnic communities on Community Councils, the Community Resources team, assisted by the Corporate Equality team, engaged with the minority community, leading to a number of applications from that community. We now have 9 new community council members from the minority ethnic community.

Developing a strong multi-agency partnership against harassment and hate crime

3. Considerable progress has been made towards the formation of an active Hate Crime Action Group in East Renfrewshire. As steps toward formally launching the group during Hate Crime Action Week in October 2016, 12 people participated in the Hate Crime Training organised for partners on 8 March 2016. We have also begun the process of identifying prospective Hate Crime Reporting Centres.

Ensuring that more of our employees, councillors and community advocates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to work for fairness and equality

4. In the course of the year, the Corporate Equality Unit provided training on Equality Considerations in Procurement; Religious Diversity and Antidiscrimination; and Hate Crime to 30 participants, 24 of whom were Council employees. The others came from partners such as the NHS.

5. The Equality Impact Assessment toolkit has been updated to include Human Rights considerations and will become operational once training has been given to colleagues to skill them in the human rights aspects during the remainder of 2016.

6. We are working to mainstream equality and human rights in some key areas including our performance measurement and decision-making processes. The Corporate Equality Unit furnished departments with prompts for building human rights considerations into the SOA/ODP refreshment process. A programme of awareness raising and support is being developed by the Unit to further assist departments toward achieving this outcome.

Further promoting disability equality

7. Our Community Resources Team and the Corporate Equality Team continue to support East Renfrewshire Disability Action, ERDA, to represent all disabled people in East Renfrewshire. Our Youth Services team has been consulting with 3 disabled groups that they support, namely the Monday Night Group; Rule Breakers; and Fantastic Friends Friday. Parents and carers are also engaged with in these consultations. Ongoing encouragement is being directed at the three groups to participate in the Council's Youth Forum.

8. We have achieved a fair representation of disabled people on the Citizens' Panel. 117 out of 552 respondents in the latest Citizens' Panel survey identified themselves as disabled.

9. Efforts are being made to increase the employability of disabled people in East Renfrewshire. 9 disabled people are currently being supported by the Employability Team. In addition 40 people with learning disability are being supported on the EAST Project, run by Enable.

Delivering services to meet the diverse needs of the growing older population Older Adults Health Improvement

10. Details of work in this area are available under SOA 5 in the end of year SOA and ODP report. In addition, significant work has taken place, during the period under review, in health improvement where we aim to co-produce a range of activities that improve health, prevent ill health and reduce social isolation for people with/or at risk of developing long term condition; and to support adults to achieve a range of talking points personal outcomes and increase the number of people involved in their community and develop skills and capacity. 46 sessions have been delivered for Men's Shed, with the number of participants per week fluctuating from 4 – 15 per block of sessions. 390 walks have taken place during our Walking Programme, and the number of participants per quarter has increased from 116 to 1606. Eleven sessions have been held for our Long term conditions group, with the number of participants per quarter fluctuating between 19 and 32. Three Mental Health training courses were held. 4 Volunteers were recruited to develop our Waterworks project, 'Give it a Grow', 4 sessions were held and 16 people attended. 14 people started our 10 x 2 hour Still Game Sessions and 10 completed. 7 sessions of our Stride (activity group) were held, attended by 42 people. 6 sessions of our Memory Lane dementia peer support group were held, attended by 28 people.

Becoming more inclusive of young people by involving them in decision-making and investing in more facilities to meet their need

11. The Young Persons Services team has supported the local members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the local Youth Forum to tackle issues and concerns that young people have in our local area. Some of the concerns raised include transport across the authority, free or low cost leisure facilities, and campaigning for better services to support young people with mental health issues.

12. In March 2015 13 young people stood for election for the 3 available MSYP seats in East Renfrewshire. There were 2 available seats for the Eastwood constituency, with 10 candidates standing and 1 Renfrewshire South seat with 3 candidates. 1466 votes were cast, equating to 14% of all eligible school age young people voting.

13. The opening of the Barrhead Foundry has created new opportunities for young people to be involved in more leisure activities in East Renfrewshire.

14. Children and young people are increasingly involved in decision making processes. All schools and establishments have pupil councils who meet regularly and provide opportunities for children, across all stages, to give their views on aspects of school life, school improvement plans etc. Children also have regular opportunities with their teachers to plan their own learning, including self-evaluation, how they learn, the contexts through which they learn, and next steps in their learning.

Further pursuing racial equality:

15. The Corporate Equality Unit continues to support Diversity ER to represent all minority ethnic communities in East Renfrewshire. A number of supported workshop sessions were held with Diversity ER, to the formulation of an assets-based Development Plan, aspects of which are being implemented. Thus for example, the Corporate Equality Unit has supported Diversity ER to pursue discussions with the East Renfrewshire Leisure Trust on swimming lessons for minority ethnic communities. So far, this has led to at least 68 minority ethnic women participating in a pilot project involving accessing swimming facilities, including lessons. The Culture and Leisure Trust is committed to increasing usage of East Renfrewshire swimming facilities by minority ethnic women.

16. The Corporate Equality Unit has also supported the Older People's Drop-In Group at Fairweather Hall to provide a day a week facility to 20 older people per week. The regular sessions include yoga classes, talks by relevant agencies and lunches. The group also organises day trips around Scotland and the occasional holidays abroad, funded by participants themselves.

17. The Education Department is committed to encouraging and supporting the learning of languages other than English. Thus Mandarin was delivered across 4 clusters of schools (St Ninian's, Williamwood, Barrhead and Mearns Castle) as part of ERC's strategic approach to the implementation of the Scottish Government's 1+2 Languages manifesto/expectation. This means that all children in P5/6/7 have had exposure to Mandarin and all children in S1/2, with an opportunity for those in St Ninian's and Mearns Castle to continue their study of Mandarin to SQA accreditation levels. The department plans to expand the provision for Mandarin. Higher Urdu is delivered through after school classes by an external provider. These classes take place x3 per week across 3 secondary schools and the examination success rate is very high. The Education Department is currently exploring opportunities to expand the range of languages taught.