

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 19th March 2018

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Regeneration and Strategy, Cllr James Swindlehurst
Health and Social Care, Cllr Natasa Pantelic

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

STATUTORY EQUALITIES REPORT (INCLUDING GENDER PAY GAP REPORT)

1 Purpose of Report

To present to Cabinet the *2018 Equality and Diversity Report* in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). This includes an update on progress against the four- yearly statutory equality objectives and the new statutory reporting on the Gender Pay Gap for 2017/8.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

(a) That progress against the following agreed equality objectives as detailed in the 2018 Report be noted:

- (i) To have a representative and inclusive workforce
- (ii) To reduce inequalities in service access and outcomes
- (iii) To improve equality of opportunity through fair and evidence-based decision-making
- (iv) To help foster good community relations and community cohesion

(b) That the independently audited results of the gender pay gap for Slough Borough Council employees be noted in full compliance with the statutory duty for public authorities employing more than 250 staff to publish this by 30 March 2018.

3. a The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

Reducing inequalities and promoting improved outcomes for all groups relates to all aspects of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy's priorities as set out below:

- 1. Protecting vulnerable children
- 2. Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities
- 3. Improving mental health and wellbeing
- 4. Housing

The Equality Objectives were developed in 2017 using the evidence base of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, amongst other data sources.

3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Reducing inequalities and “closing the gaps” is a cornerstone of the vision expressed in the Five Year Plan. Reference to the statutory equality objectives is explicitly made in the Five Year Plan and reflected in the associated outcome plans. Particular emphasis has been placed in the objectives on reducing inequalities in major outcomes areas for housing, adult health and wellbeing, and opportunities for children. These are highlighted as priority areas in the Five Year Plan.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action in terms of allocated budgets. There is potential risk of financial penalty for non-compliance with statutory reporting and risk arising from future discrimination claims if the council is found to be in breach of the Equality Act (2010).

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
Progress against Equality Objectives	Legal challenge of non-compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty	Reporting requirements met		
Compliance with Gender Pay Gap Reporting	Legal challenge of non-compliance with duty to report gender pay gap Inequality in the workforce can affect recruitment and retention of talent Can help identify any potential areas of indirect discrimination	Gender Pay Gap has been independently audited and verified as accurate and compliant, based on all currently available payroll data.		Action plan to be developed to reduce gap in future years

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Slough Borough Council has a statutory duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in the provision of its services and in its workforce (Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010). It is a statutory requirement for public authorities to publish their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually, including information on their workforce characteristics, with equality objectives set every 4 years. It is a statutory duty for the council to publish its gender pay gap annually from March 2018.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The equality objectives expressly promote equality for all residents of Slough, providing a focus in priority areas to close outcome gaps between different groups. The workforce report covers all equality characteristics where data is available. The Gender Pay Gap specifically identifies differences in pay between men and women within an organisation's workforce. This has identified that men earn more on average than women as employees at Slough Borough Council.

(e) Workforce

An equality objective relates specifically to the council's workforce; the council is committed to being an inclusive employer, attracting and retaining a talented and committed workforce from all backgrounds. It is also committed to promoting gender equality and reducing the gender pay gap where possible.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 It is a statutory requirement for public authorities to publish compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually. The 2018 report shows the council's continued commitment to equality and diversity – both in terms of employment and services. There are comprehensive workforce statistics, which show a broadly representative workforce and a diverse applicant pool. However, more work needs to be done to encourage the disclosure of equalities monitoring information, both for existing staff and applicants. This is particularly the case for disability status and ethnicity. Analysis of salaries shows that more can be done to improve ethnic minority and female representation at the most senior salary levels. In other areas, the council continues to make steady progress against its 4 main equality objectives and details of these can be found in the main report (Appendix A).
- 5.2 The council has a median and mean gender pay gap of 12.5%. This is consistent with many public sector organisations, and there are robust and transparent pay policies in place, and a range of initiatives (including access to flexible working) which support women the workplace. The national average gender pay gap is 18.4%.
- 5.3 Although the equality objectives are set over a four year period, Members have requested annual progress reports. This report marks the first annual update on the agreed objectives. The gender pay gap will be reported annually. An associated action plan will be developed to understand the causes of the pay gap and identify actions that will help to close it. These are likely to include a focus on the following areas:

- reviewing our recruitment practices to remove any barriers that might be affecting the applications of women ,especially for more senior positions, with a focus on using gender neutral language in adverts and jobs “flexible by default”.
- addressing gender imbalance in particular roles and encouraging a wider applicant pool using non- traditional sources.
- implementing flexible and SMART working for all aspects of business, where the needs of the service can be met
- mentoring and development schemes.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

The promotion of equality and diversity - both for employees and residents - is a key priority for the council. The *2018 Equality and Diversity Report* shows where progress is being made and the challenges that still remain in closing some of the persistent gaps.

8 **Appendix Attached**

‘A’ - 2018 Equality and Diversity Report

9 **Background Papers**

None