

	<h2>Policy and Resources Committee</h2> <h3>21 July 2014</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Equalities Report 2014</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Kate Kennally, Strategic Director for Communities</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>Annual Equalities Report 2014</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Lesley Holland 0208 359 3004 <a href="mailto:Lesley.Holland@Barnet.gov.uk">Lesley.Holland@Barnet.gov.uk</a></p>

### Summary

On 24 June 2013, Cabinet Resources Committee agreed to publish an Annual Equalities Report. It is a requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which forms part of the Equality Act 2010, for Local Authorities to monitor and report progress against the delivery of their Strategic Equalities Objective. For Barnet, the publication of the Annual Equalities Report forms part of that process.

Following approval of the document by Policy and Resources Committee the Annual Equalities Report, 2014, will be published on the Council’s website.

The Annual Equalities Report:

- Describes the Council’s approach to fairness, equal opportunities and valuing diversity across the borough;
- Uses case studies to show how this approach is put into practice;
- Reports progress against the Council’s Strategic Equalities Objective;
- Describes how the Council has strengthened its approach to equalities over the past year: Through consultation on a refreshed Equalities Policy (published in January 2014); reporting progress against the Strategic Equalities Objective; establishing a ‘Communities Together’ Network; and publication of the first cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment of budget proposals for the 2014/15 financial year; and
- Proposes a number of priorities for further work in 2014/15.

### Recommendations

**1. That the Committee approve the Annual Equalities Report 2014 before its publication on the Council's website.**

**1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 An Annual Equalities Report is required under the agreed arrangements for reporting progress against the Council's Strategic Equalities Objective. This was agreed at Cabinet Resources Committee on 24 June 2013.

**2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

2.1 No alternative reporting option is required.

**3. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

3.1 Once the Annual Equalities Report has been approved by Policy and Resources Committee, it will be reported to council on 16 September 2014, and published on the equality pages of the Council's website. The priorities for 2014/15 set out in the report will be implemented.

**4. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

**4.1 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

4.1.1 There are no resource implications in this proposal.

**4.2 Legal and Constitutional References**

4.2.1 Council Constitution, Responsibility for Functions – Annex A, sets out the terms of reference of the Policy and Resources Committee, including 'To be responsible for the overall strategic direction of the Council including the following specific functions/activities: Equalities, Diversity and Community Cohesion'.

4.2.2 The Council has statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 - and in particular s149 which sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) - which came into force on 5 April 2011.

**4.2.3 General Public Sector Equality Duty**

The PSED consists of a general duty, with three main aims. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and

- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

#### 4.2.4 Specific Equalities Duty

The specific duty is contained in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 which commenced in England in September 2011 and requires public bodies to:

- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years; and
- Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually.

The information published must include information relating to employees (for public bodies with 150 or more employees) and information relating to people who are affected by the public body's policies and practices.

#### 4.2.5 Protected Characteristics

The 2010 Equality Act identifies the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.

#### 4.2.6 Report of Independent Steering Group (ISG) Review of General and Specific Duties of Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

A review of the PSED was carried out by an independent steering group under the Government's Red Tape Challenge, with a report was published in September 2013. The report recommendations make no change to any of the existing provisions of the PSED. The report recommends that a further review should be carried out in September 2016. As such, the recommended working assumption for Barnet is that business as usual continues with no necessity to review processes until further guidance is issued.

### **4.3 Risk Management**

- 4.3.1 The Council's approach to equalities is designed to achieve its Strategic Equalities Objective; to mitigate a range of equalities risks; and to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Equalities Act 2010, including the general and specific PSED duties.

- 4.3.2 The Council must ensure that it meets its legal obligations to pay due regard to equalities where some functions have been delegated. The Council's Equalities Policy – refreshed and published in January 2014 - outlines what the Council expects of partners so that its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 are understood and implemented. The PSED cannot be delegated and the risks of non-compliance can be mitigated by consistently demonstrating that due regard has been paid to equalities.
- 4.3.3 The Independent Government Review into PSED (September 2013) also recommended that public sector bodies should take a proportionate approach to the requirement to pay due regard to equalities and not seek to 'gold plate'. It also recommends the need for Equalities and Human Rights Commission to determine minimum standards for compliance and for more speedy and less costly process than Judicial Review to resolve any dispute.

#### **4.4 Equalities and Diversity**

- 4.4.1 The legal requirements of the 2010 Equality Act are outlined at paragraphs 4.2.2 – 4.2.5 above and describe the requirement for public bodies to pay due regard to equalities.
- 4.4.2 This Annual Equalities Report responds to the requirement to publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty at least annually.

#### **4.5 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 4.5.1 The Council's Strategic Equalities Objective is set out in the equalities section of the Corporate Plan 2013 -2016. The objective states that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect; have equal opportunity with other citizens and receive quality services provided to Best Value principles. This reflects the commitment set out in the Council's constitution.

#### **4.6 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.6.1 It is not considered necessary to consult on the Annual Equalities Report although there was a public consultation on the Council's 2014 Equalities Policy. The Annual Equalities Report will be published on the Council's website.

### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 At the meeting on 21 January 2014, Full Council took note of the adoption of Barnet Council's revised Equalities Policy.
- 5.2 At the meeting on 18 November 2013, Business Management Scrutiny Committee considered the draft of the Council's revised Equalities Policy and recommended that the policy be reported to Full Council following the consultation exercise.
- 5.3 At the meeting on 24 September 2013, Cabinet noted the content of the council's draft Equalities Policy and 'Communities Together' Action Plan and the approach for promoting community cohesion and monitoring community

tensions. Cabinet agreed to launch a public consultation on the Council's draft Equalities Policy.

- 5.4 At the meeting on 24 June 2013, Cabinet Resources Committee approved the performance measures for monitoring progress against the council's Strategic Equality Objective, as set out in the Corporate Plan and required by the PSED. The Committee agreed that an Annual Equalities Report should be published as part of the Council's approach to reporting progress against the Strategic Equality Objective.

**London Borough of Barnet  
Annual Equalities Report 2014  
Aiming for Equal Life Chances in Barnet: Putting Policy into Practice**

**Contents**

- 1. Foreword by the Leader of the Council**
- 2. Introduction**
- 3. Our legal obligations and commitment to residents**
- 4. Our borough: Key facts and figures about Barnet's population**
- 5. Barnet's approach to equal opportunities for all: Putting policy into practice**
- 6. Measuring progress against our Strategic Equalities Objective**
- 7. The way forward**

## **1. Foreword by the Leader of the Council**

Barnet's Annual Equalities Report 2014, sets out the progress the Council has made in ensuring that the decisions we take – particularly during these financially challenging times - do not disproportionately impact on groups with protected characteristics across the borough. The Council's commitment – as set out in our Strategic Equalities Objective - is that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect; have equal opportunity with other citizens; and receive quality services provided to Best Value principles.

This year, the Council has asked residents what matters to them about equal opportunities, diversity and fairness in the borough as we developed our revised Equalities Policy. Residents told us that the Council – working with its local its strategic partners - should:

- Do all it can to support everyone to enjoy the advantages of life in Barnet.
- Work in ways that reflect the needs of all of Barnet's residents.
- Take account of the bigger picture when making decisions, including the wider financial pressures that Barnet's residents face.
- Continue to engage and involve the community in the difficult decisions and the opportunities facing the borough.

Based on this feedback, Barnet's Equalities Policy was refreshed and published in January 2014. The Policy sets out how the Council will embed equalities into the decisions it takes. In doing so, we will be open and transparent by publishing information on our progress and how we will improve engagement with residents through our Communities Together Network.

There is no getting away from the fact that the economic challenges the UK has faced over the last 5 years have had a significant impact of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. For Local Government, the squeeze on public spending and rising demand has required some very tough decisions. In Barnet, we always consider the equalities impacts of our decisions – both in terms of specific budget decisions and, for the first time this year, through an assessment of the cumulative impact of the budget proposals on different protected groups.

The Council has approached these challenges in a sensible way which has enabled us to provide a degree of protection to the front line services that residents depend on. At the same time, we have also been able to set aside funding to invest in the issues residents care about - green spaces, schools, housing, transport and infrastructure and helping young people to find jobs.

As we look ahead, it is clear that further tough decisions will required for the Council to live within its means in the face of further pressure on its resources. However, the economy is now growing again and, in Barnet, unemployment has fallen to pre-recession levels. This will create a real opportunity for Barnet's residents and businesses to share in the benefits of growth, regeneration and success. But it is important that this potential for success is to the benefit of all residents of Barnet. The Council recognises this and will work closely with other parts of the public sector - such as the NHS and Job Centre Plus - to identify those residents who are at risk of

missing out and provide the right interventions when needed, to help residents to help themselves and to benefit from the opportunities of living in a successful borough as part of a successful London.

I am proud that, as the Council's Residents Perception Survey consistently shows, Barnet is a borough that benefits from strong and cohesive communities that look out for each other and get involved in local issues. In the coming year, enabling greater community participation will be a priority for the council so that we can understand the needs of local communities, be more transparent and involve residents more in the services they use.

**Councillor Richard Cornelius**  
**Leader of the Council**

## 2. Introduction

Barnet's Annual Equalities Report 2014, considers the approach that Barnet Council takes to fairness and equal opportunities and describes what we have done over the last year to implement our Strategic Equalities Objective.

The Council has focused on getting the basics right:

- We have measured our progress in implementing our Strategic Equalities Objective using data relating to residents satisfaction, employment, health outcomes and accessible housing. Section 6 of this report sets out how well we have done.
- We have consulted on and refreshed the Council's Equalities Policy and Action Plan, which are available on our [website](#).
- This year, the processes and controls relating to how the Council ensures that the equalities impacts of the decision we take are understood have been validated by our internal auditors who found them improved since last year and have provided a 'satisfactory' assurance rating.
- For a number of years, the Council has integrated equality considerations into our annual Finance and Business Planning processes through assessing the impact of our budget proposals on different groups. For the first time, in 2013/14, we have considered the cumulative impact of the Council's budget proposals and we will do the same next year and in future years. This means that we can consider the impact of proposals 'in the round', considering the totality of impacts to one particular group or thinking about the impact of national policy changes such reforms to the benefits system which aims to get more people into work. There is more information about this on page 7.

In June 2013, information was released from the 2011 Census and which the Council has used to develop a number of themed briefings. This information provides a useful baseline picture of the borough and gives us a more detailed view of what 'makes Barnet Barnet' from specific service data exercises. For example, we have used data to understand more about the residents who are impacted by the Benefit Cap and to ensure that employment support is targeted to their particular needs. We have also used resident consultation and engagement – such as Citizen Panel events and Focus Groups - to understand what residents care about as the Council considers how it will meet the financial challenges ahead.

Consultation with residents has enabled the Council to develop a set of principles based on the views of Barnet's residents<sup>1</sup>. The consultation has shown that residents

---

<sup>1</sup> To help inform the council's future long term spending plans the council commissioned the Office for Public Management (OPM), an independent research organisation, to run a series of resident workshops, service user and businesses focus groups last autumn. We have particularly asked those who most rely on council services to find out how they think the council need to change.

The [findings](#) provide a rich evidence base of residents' priorities, what residents value most, their ideas for generating income, and how local people can work together. As a result the council has been able to identify [broad themes](#) based on residents' views and involvement which will be used to help focus the council's future long term spending plans.

Residents said that they could see a case for communities, businesses and individuals playing a bigger part in keeping Barnet 'Barnet', and taking more responsibility for meeting the challenges.

value fairness, responsibility and quality of life. The Council wants to use this Annual Equalities Report to show that, for us, furthering equal opportunities is not a 'tick box exercise' and that it forms a key part of what we do in our daily work. This report includes some case study material at Section 5 to demonstrate how we are putting policy into practice.

The legislative backdrop of these efforts is the defined in the Equality Act 2010, which aims to ensure fair treatment for all irrespective of age, disability, ethnic origins and race, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation. As an organisation exercising public functions, it also requires the Council - and its partners - to demonstrate that due regard has been paid to equalities in the decisions we make. More information about our legal responsibilities and our commitments to residents can be found at Section 3 of this report.

### **3. Our legal obligations**

The 2010 Equality Act and associated Regulations outline the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and require all Local Authorities to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups;
- Foster good relations between people from different groups;
- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years; and
- Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually. The information published must include information relating to employees (for public bodies with 150 or more employees) and information relating to people who are affected by the public body's policies and practices.

This places a legal obligation on the Council to pay due regard to equalities in an appropriate and proportionate manner. In Barnet, we do this by assessing the impact of the Council's decisions on different groups across the borough including those identified in equality legislation as protected characteristics, namely: Age; disability; gender; gender reassignment marriage; civil partnership; pregnancy; maternity; sexual orientation; religion or belief. In addition, the Council tries to assess the impact on carers (including young carers) and those on low income.

#### **Barnet Council's commitment to residents**

##### **We will:**

- **Be clear about our responsibilities** under the Equality Act 2010 to further equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination. These are set out in our Equalities Policy.
- **Champion equal opportunities and value diversity at both the Councillor and Officer level:**

- The Council's Policy and Resources Committee – chaired by the Leader of the Council - has responsibility for overall strategic direction on equalities, diversity and community cohesion.
  - The Council's Community Leadership Committee – chaired by Councillor David Longstaff - has responsibility for maintaining good community relations with Barnet's diverse communities and ensure that all communities have the opportunity of full participation in borough affairs.
  - The Council has appointed a Lead Council Officer for Equalities – Kate Kennally, Strategic Director for Communities
  - The Council has appointed a Lead Council Officer for Community Cohesion – Pam Wharfe, Strategic Director for Growth and Environment.
- **Reflect the principle of fairness in decision making.** Council papers and reports will describe how we have analysed the equality impact of our budget decisions, service changes and projects. The Council will conduct and publish a cumulative impact assessment of all budget proposals as part of the annual Finance and Business Planning process. The Council's first cumulative impact assessment was published in February 2014.
  - **Measure progress against the Council's Strategic Equalities Objective.** We will publish how we are doing on our website and through our Annual Equalities Report.
  - **Build closer links between communities and foster good relations.** The Council's Communities Together Network will share information, take joint action to build stronger communities and ensure there are good links to respond to any incidents that do occur. This group will report annually to the Safer Communities Partnership Board.

#### 4. Our borough: Key facts and figures about Barnet's population

The GLA population projections of June 2014 show how Barnet is growing and changing. The total population of Barnet in 2014 is estimated to be 364,481. There has been a significant increase in the diversity of growth in the borough population and growth in older and younger generations has been particularly rapid. Between 2001 and 2011 the population grew by 11.5% and Barnet remains the second most populous borough in London. It is expected to increase by 5% by 2019 with further growth in young and old cohorts. Our reputation for excellent schools and green spaces makes us a popular destination for young families. The over 65 population is forecast to grow by **8.4%** in the next 5 years and **20%** in the next decade.

Barnet is a racially diverse and multi faith borough and proud of community cohesion. Over a third (**38%**) of Barnet's citizens come from a rich diversity of black and minority ethnic groups. Christianity remains the biggest religious group (41.2%) and Barnet is home to the UK's largest Jewish community (**15.2%**). Other significant groups are no religion (**16.1%**), Muslim (10.3%) and Hindu communities (6.2%).

These demographic changes present challenges both in the demand for services and the way we commission, deliver and continuously improve our

services. Whether providing services for the under 5's or over 55's the evidence shows the diversity of our citizens and communities and underlines the need to take account of these differences as we deliver services.

Barnet is a relatively affluent borough with significant pockets of deprivation and we have been successful in attracting regeneration funding to those areas in 7 major regeneration schemes. Our Economic Strategy will reflect the importance that everyone benefits from regeneration and growth, job creation, reinvigorating communities and improved quality of life. This includes the protected characteristics outlined in the 2010 Equality Act as well as citizens and other groups in Barnet who can experience disadvantage, for example:

- Carers
- Lone parents
- Unemployed people
- Young people not in employment education or training
- People with a low income

Further information about the demographic makeup of Barnet is available on our [website](#).

## **5. Barnet's approach to equal opportunities for all: Putting policy into practice**

The Council's Equalities Policy and accompanying Action Plan, published in January 2014, set out how we will deliver our Strategic Equalities Objective. The Policy can be found on our [website](#).

The case studies in this section of the report show how we are putting our Equality Policy and principles into practice. The Policy helps us to further equal opportunities and work with our partners in a borough wide approach to equalities, improving service access and outcomes for our citizens.

The key ingredients of our approach to further equal opportunities and value diversity are considered in turn:

- Strong partnerships
- Using data and responding to need
- Mainstreaming equalities into everything we do
- Considering the impact of our decisions on different groups, assessing the equalities impact of our proposals and using it in decision making to ensure we are fair
- Engaging with Barnet's diverse communities to learn more about them and what matters to them
- Building on community strengths and supporting people to take control of their own lives
- Checking how we are doing, monitoring our performance against our equalities objectives

### **i) Strong partnerships: Return to work support for people impacted by reforms to the benefit system**

This case study looks at how Barnet is working with health and employment partners to help residents respond to Government's programme of reforms to the benefits system. Over the past year, a number of partners have worked together as part of the Benefit Cap Task Force, to deliver a programme of local employment-based initiatives which support people with a mental health problem to retain or regain work, to make positive choices about employment and take control of their lives.

The initiative has identified and supported individuals affected by reforms to the benefit system for whom mental health is a barrier to employment. Local data shows us that almost a quarter (23%) of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants have a mental health problem and more than 40% of Incapacity Benefit claimants have mental health problems. Among individuals in work the prevalence of mental health problems is around 14%. Best practice in Public Health shows that work can be good for people's health and wellbeing.

Working in partnership has been crucial to making this initiative happen. It has brought together different service providers in the borough including health, social services, JCP, Barnet Homes and Capita Customer and Support Group.

In December 2013, the use of Health Mentors was piloted to provide motivational support and signposting to appropriate services to people affected by the overall Benefit Cap. By April 2014, 100 unemployed people were matched with employment coaches, and we are now seeing results with over 30% of people on the scheme now in work. The initiative follows best practice and brings together employability and health support and where appropriate people have been referred to mental health services.

The next phase in this programme will be to enhance existing services and increase the range of choice for service users; to embed motivational, vocational and psychological support within Job Centre Plus, and to commission specialist support to promote the recovery of people having both severe and enduring mental health needs and support employment.

## **ii) Using equalities data and responding to need to improve education attainment in Barnet**

This case study demonstrates how we use evidence and data to monitor performance and narrow any gaps in attainment so that we can continuously improve our services. Barnet's aim is to improve attainment rates for all school children in the borough. We monitor the attainment rates of all groups and take action to narrow the gap to create better life chances for all children and young people in the borough and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The schools survey (2013) indicates that 46.7% of Barnet's primary school population have English as a second language. There are 177 languages, other than English, spoken as the first language by primary school pupils. This has been increasing year on year and is likely to continue. The language with the highest number of primary school speakers (other than English) is Polish with 4% of pupils (1,100) speaking this language, the next highest is Arabic spoken by 875 pupils and Somali is spoken by 840 pupils. In Barnet's secondary schools there are 115 languages spoken other than English. The language other than English spoken by most pupils is Gujarati spoken by 3% of pupils.

91% of Barnet's primary schools and 86% of our secondary schools are rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding. Barnet has set an objective to be in the top 10% attainment rate of schools and it is in the top 5% of Local Authorities nationally when it comes to exam success at key stage 4. 2013 GCSE results show that 71.5% of Year 11 pupils in Barnet obtained 5 GCSEs including English and maths, compared to the national average of 59.2%.

Barnet monitors the attendance and educational attainment data of all pupils, including specific groups (e.g. Black and ethnic minority pupils, pupils on free school meals, looked after pupils). Analysis of under-performance is communicated through termly briefings with primary and secondary Head teachers with recommendations and challenge to schools, to identify and disseminates good practice to narrow the gap between vulnerable pupils and all pupils. This influences decisions about how schools can spend their Pupil Premium, which is funding that is allocated for specifically raising the educational achievement of disadvantaged pupils. We are proud that the education attainment rates of pupils on free school meals, looked after children and low income families, are all above the London average.

We will continue to monitor and improve the attainment rates of all groups to create better life chances for all children and young people in the borough and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

### **iii) Mainstreaming equalities into everything we do- investing in green spaces through community partnership working**

This case study illustrates how equalities considerations have been taken on board in relationships with residents, community and development partners to design playgrounds which work for local communities and respond to the diversity of children and the needs of their parents and carers.

A whole range of people in Barnet use and enjoy our many parks and green spaces. Working in partnership with residents, development partners, Community Friends Groups from Childs Hill, Northway Gardens, Hendon Park and Malcolm Park, and the Mayor of London's Pocket Parks Grant scheme we have raised funds and designed new play facilities in the following 6 Barnet Parks:

- Hendon Park
- Malcolm Park
- Brunswick Park
- Childs Hill Park
- Northway Gardens toddlers and juniors to 10
- Cricklewood Playground

Local residents have fed into the playground design for toddler, junior, and older age groups to select the right play equipment and to prioritise the play items that were most important to the communities through consultation and outreach work led by Friends of Parks Groups.

Friends groups have supported fundraising activities with Northway Gardens raising £20,000 from Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association. A grant of £40,000 was received for Cricklewood Park from the Mayor of London's fund towards the

overall budget for the project is £300,000 including money from the Mayor's OLF and Section 106 funds.

The playgrounds will provide excellent play opportunities for children and families and keep Barnet a good place to live, work and study.

**iv) Considering the impact of our decisions on different groups, assessing the equalities impact of our proposals and using it in decision making to ensure we are fair: Cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment**

This case study looks at how the Council has assessed the cumulative equalities impacts of budget proposals for 2014/15, to show how we monitor the impact of the decisions required to set a balanced budget on an annual basis.

For the 2014/15 Financial Year, the Council was required to identify savings of £19.01 million from a budget of £292 million. The Council's approach has been to plan early for savings and to maximise the amount saved through efficiencies in order to limit the impact on front line services.

As part of the annual process for setting a balance budget, the Council carries out Equality Impact Assessments for each individual budget saving proposal and consults residents on specific proposals. Two proposals were initially considered and then rejected following an Equality Impact Assessment as the services supported specific vulnerable groups where there was a lack of alternative support should those services be cut.

For the first time in 2014/15, the Council conducted and published a cumulative impact assessment of the budget proposals to identify whether any groups might be disproportionately impacted when all proposals were considered together. This assessment also took account of the impact of external factors on Barnet's residents such as cost of living challenges and the impact of the Government's benefit reform programme.

For 2014/15, the Council assessed that no significant adverse impacts were identified for particular groups. However, given the targeted nature of Council services, the following groups were affected by our proposals:

- Older people
- Younger people
- Disabled people including people mental health problems
- Other Vulnerable groups
  - Lone parents and some families
  - Unemployed people
  - People with a low income
  - Carers

We have shared this information within the Council and with strategic partners so that it can be taken into account as the council implements further savings and delivers our corporate priorities. The report can be found on the council's [website](#).

**v) Engaging with Barnet's diverse communities to learn more about them and what matters to them: The Communities Together Network**

Community cohesion is strength in Barnet with 84% of residents agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the borough, an improvement of 1 percentage point since 2012. In addition 78% of residents feel that people treat each other with respect and consideration. Overall the percentage of residents who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together is 87% which is 4 percentage points above the national average.

The Council has developed a 'Communities Together' network to promote community wellbeing and encourage cohesive and safe communities. This is an important network to promote understanding and support Barnet's communities to get on well together. The network brings together community groups and strategic partners to share information and talk about what really matters to our communities and citizens. Not surprisingly good schools, education, health, homes, jobs, community safety and cohesion are high on the agenda. The network has discussed gangs, youth culture and violence and the forward work programme will cover the role of schools in promoting good relations and how regeneration schemes can support healthy communities.

The network also supports community responses to any events that do arise. The importance of strong community networks was highlighted in May 2013 when the Bravanese Centre, a community centre for Barnet citizens from a Somali Bravanese background, was badly damaged in an arson attack. The centre received many offers of support, such as temporary accommodation, from other faith groups in the borough. As a result, community and after school education activities were able to continue with a minimum of disruption from East Finchley Library and council premises in Whetstone.

Barnet Estates Team is working closely with the Bravanese Centre and community representatives to find a longer term location that provides flexible facilities for the Bravanese Centre and others in the community.

**vi) Building on community strengths and supporting people to take control of their own lives- reaching hard to hear voices and improving services: 'Talk to me'**

This case study gives an example of how the Council is involving less heard voices from service users to change and improve services.

The Barnet Joint Strategic Needs Assessment described how people with Learning Disabilities and Autism have poorer health outcomes than the population as a whole. For example people with Learning Disabilities and/ or autism can have shorter life expectancies than other groups. Healthwatch Barnet conducted a study in partnership with Barnet Mencap that suggested changes would be required to ensure these groups have fair access to health services.

They involved service users with learning disabilities and people with autism in their study and listened to their stories of health care experiences at GP surgeries, outpatient clinics, emergency and hospital treatment, care in the home and drop in services. The aim of the project was to give hard to hear voices the opportunity to make practical recommendations which would improve service outcomes.

They suggested a number of changes to processes such as the offer of longer health appointments and broader use of easy read documents. Implementing these recommendations will make some headway into bridging the difference in life expectancy.

## **6. Measuring progress against our Strategic Equalities Objective**

The council's Strategic Equalities Objective sets out *our commitment that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect; have equal opportunities with other citizens and receive quality services provided to Best Value principles.*

The Council adopted performance indicators so that we could measure progress against this aim. We monitor the measures and publish information on our website. The full range of measures for the Council as a whole and at a service level for 2013/14 can be found on our [website](#).

The measures focus on employment and skills, life expectancy and health, the accessibility of new homes and customer satisfaction. Our performance against these measures in 2013/14 is shown below:

- 87% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This is 4 percentage points above the national average.
- Community cohesion is increasing with 84% of residents agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the borough, and 78% of residents feel there is not a problem or not a very big problem with people not treating each other with respect and consideration.
- Unemployment in Barnet at 6.4 % is approximately 2 percentage points below the London figure. There have been improvements in employment opportunities for young people not in employment education and training and the unemployment rate for this group is 2.3% This is the fourth lowest figure in the country and well below the London figure of 3.8%.
- There has been a 21% reduction in job seekers claims in Barnet. Benefits claimants in Barnet at 9.8% are below the London average of 12.2%.
- Borough performance on achieving the Lifetime Homes standard has improved since October 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, the launch date of Re. There has been an improvement in the number of wheelchair accessible homes and those meeting the lifetime homes standard. Just under 80% of new homes approved in 2013/14 will deliver the Lifetime Homes standards compared with 65% in 2012/13. Wheelchair Homes were 7.4% of new homes approved.
- Overall there have been some health improvements in Barnet- most notably child health outcomes outperform the London average and under 65 deaths from Cardio Vascular Disease continue to fall but life expectancy is only slightly increasing with a slight decrease in the gap in life expectancy between the richest and the poorest.
- The key area where we think we can do better is on our engagement with residents. The Resident Perception Survey shows a downward trend against the indicator 'the council doesn't do enough for people like me'. Overall 55% do not feel that the council does enough for people like me. There are significant variations beneath this with almost two thirds of people with a limiting long term illness or disability sharing this perception together with

people who have lived in the borough for a longer period of time (over 20 years). The areas that are most likely to feel this way are Hendon, Colindale, West Finchley and Underhill.

- We are not happy with the direction of travel on this indicator and we want to understand the meaning of it. We will undertake further analysis to understand the reasons behind this perception and develop a response in 2014.

A full report can be found on our [website](#)

## **7. Looking to the future**

As we look to the future, it is clear that further tough decisions will be required if the Council is to continue to live within its means. The impact of continued austerity to the end of the decade, coupled with rising demand, means that the Council is forecasting a further £72 million reduction in its budget over the period from 2016/17 to 2019/20. More detail about the financial challenge facing the Council – along with some of the options that will be considered by Councillors to deal with it - can be found on our [website](#).

In approaching these challenges, we will continue to focus on fairness and making fair decisions as we identify our priorities for the future. We will work in partnership with all our Delivery Units and all our strategic partners including Health, Job Centre Plus, Re, The Barnet Group, our commercial partner, CAPITA and the West London Alliance to consider the impact across all residents.

However, as we look ahead, it is not all doom and gloom. Growth is expected in Barnet through the regeneration of areas such as Colindale and Grahame Park and with the major redevelopment of Brent Cross Cricklewood due to start soon. This regeneration is vital for the future of the borough and will provide new homes, new jobs and will revitalise communities. The Council will work to ensure that all residents are able to take advantage of these opportunities.

Over the next year each service area will develop a profile of their customers so that we can understand need, impact and identify areas for future action. We will also use information such as the new GLA population projections, DWP employment information and the outputs of the Barnet Insight team to consider the impact of our decisions on different groups.

We will develop a number of key policies that will focus on the important areas identified this year. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will look across the health of local residents to identify gaps and areas for action. The Economic Strategy will focus on ensuring all can benefit from Barnet's expected growth. The Participation Strategy will focus on developing a closer relationship between the council, the wider public sector and residents to reconfigure local services around the needs of residents.

We will continue to measure our progress in implementing our Strategic Equalities Objective and publish the information as we deliver accessible and value for money services which address disadvantage and respond to real needs.