

Equality Impact Assessment Report

Name of policy, procedure or function: Council and Cabinet Meetings

Service Area:
Change Management

Team Members:
Cllr Max Hunt, Louise Hall

Date:
December 2007

Findings

General

Cabinet

The Cabinet is the Council executive and is made up of a Leader and eight other councillors appointed by the Council. The Cabinet is responsible for major decisions and has to work within the Budget and the Policy Framework approved by the Council and set out in the Council's Constitution. All Cabinet decisions are based on reports received from officers of the Council. General duties for Cabinet members include:

- Regular monitoring of key performance data
- Tracking key improvement areas and developments
- Receiving monthly briefings
- Overview of CPA related performance indicators
- Promotion of Directorate activities
- Ensure Equality Standard is met in line with the corporate project

Council

Full Council meetings take place where the Budget and Policy Framework is approved. The Council can approve or reject any proposals from cabinet. The Council is made up of all 52 elected members, at present there are 36 Male Councillors, 16 Female Councillors and two are of an Ethnic background.

Both of these meetings are open to public and the press; however under certain circumstances laid out in the constitution, the meetings can exclude both the press and the public. Members of the public are also able to – by written request – ask questions and receive answers at both meetings.

Consequently, this results in an open, accountable and transparent decision making process.

Specific Equality Ares

Some groups there is a lack of representation at Councillor Level, this may be due to lack of communication as all literature such as how to be a councillor and details of recruitment days is only available in English. In order to increase the representation there has to be a better targeting of community groups

and also increase the community involvement by councillors.

Certain age, religion and sexuality groups are under represented as part of consultations and at Councillor Level, this can be improved by increasing participations in consultations and increasing participation as elected members.

Further Actions

Problem/barrier identified	Actions to overcome problem/barrier	Resources required	Responsibility	Target date
Lack of representation and involvement by members of ethnic minorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on supporting community engagement by Councillors • Better targeting of information within the community through use of places of worship, community centres etc • More effective use of councillor recruitment events within the Borough 	Officer Time	Democratic Services	November 2008
Lack of representation and involvement by women	Create a Candidate Pack for the next Borough Election and emphasise:- * Child care payments available under the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme; and * Role of existing female Councillors and the positive contributions that can be made by female Councillors.	Officer time and small budget for materials and postage	Democratic Services	February 2011 (prior to next Borough Election)
Lack of involvement by members of the public in decision-making forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis to be placed upon providing information that is easy to understand • Use of more varied publicity • Creation of more informal routes to 	Officer Time	Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer and Comms	November 2008

	<p>decision making which will involve the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Constitutional arrangements regarding the format of Council and Cabinet meetings. 			
Review of access issues for disabled persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst all rooms at Southfields meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, there are restrictions in respect of access to the Town Hall in terms of the number of wheelchairs that are permitted above ground floor level in the building. These arrangements need to be reviewed and taken into account in selecting the venues for meetings. 	Officer Time	Democratic Services and Property Management	July 2008