

**Report of the Service Director
Business Improvement, Human Resources
& Communications**

AUDIT COMMITTEE – January 2023

Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Update Report for Performance Management and Equality and Inclusion.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To give an overview of the functions of the Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Business Unit.
- 1.2 To provide an update to the Committee regarding progress against the assurance programme in the specific areas of Performance Management and Equality and Inclusion.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 This report is for information.

3. Background/Current Position

- 3.1 Business Improvement – Performance
- 3.2 The Performance Team supports the development of performance frameworks and co-ordinates performance management arrangements across our organisation, ensuring a consistent and coherent approach.
- 3.3 The Performance Team delivers the Council Plan Performance report on a quarterly basis, to provide an overview of the council's latest performance, drawing upon information available for each quarter, and to illustrate progress achieved in delivering the priorities and outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2021-24.
- 3.4 The plan is scrutinised by directorate management meetings and the council's senior management team before being shared with Cabinet and then publicly released. Directorate performance frameworks are also developed and monitored to track progress against the Council Plan priorities at the service level.
- 3.5 The Council Plan contains four priorities, supported by 12 outcomes. It outlines what the council has committed to undertake in order to deliver the priorities, but it is also recognised that the council is not solely accountable for delivering these outcomes, as it works in partnership with other organisations.
- 3.6 The framework identifies what the council is seeking to achieve for the people of Barnsley, as defined in our key strategies and plans, and a series of objectives which focus on specific areas of service delivery and support for the borough and its residents.
- 3.7 To support the delivery of the Corporate Performance Plan and to communicate the progress against the Outcomes Framework, 2 products are produced for the public:
 - a. The Council Plan Narrative Performance Report

b. Power BI online report that includes all associated key performance indicators

- 3.8 The Power BI online report is a self-service report that allows users to review the red, amber or green status of each of the key critical success factors that are measured each quarter and allows the user to view progress over time either quarterly or annually.
- 3.9 The team also supports the annual business planning process on behalf of the organisation to ensure that plans to achieve our priorities and outcomes are being progressed and monitored. Business plans are essential in ensuring all services have a clear directive in delivering their services for the forthcoming fiscal year, providing excellent customer service whilst ensuring value for money is demonstrated where applicable.
- 3.10 Business Improvement – Equality and Inclusion
- 3.11 The public sector 'Equality Duty' (PSED), at section 149 Equality Act 2010, is a duty on public bodies to consider, in their day-to-day work, the needs of people who share protected characteristics. There are three aims to the duty stating the Council must pay 'due regard' to:
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a particular protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 3. Foster good relations between people who share a particular protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 3.12 The Council complies with the PSED by conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). The assessment provides a prediction of how the 'work' could impact different groups. This ensures that the organisation does not discriminate unlawfully against a person or group of people, and actively promotes equality. If the assessment predicts possible negative impacts for certain groups, then mitigations are required. The EIA template provides an audit trail to record the equality related decision-making process.
- 3.13 A Pre-Screening Assessment was introduced in 2020. This is a simple series of questions that assess whether the 'work' has any equalities relevance. Work that has no relevance to equality does not need to complete a full EIA, therefore providing a proportionate approach to the duty. The Equality and Inclusion Team provide an extra layer of scrutiny in this area to ensure officers have made the correct assessment and that a full EIA is not required.
- 3.14 During 2021/22 the Equality and Inclusion Team supported 241 full EIA's and EIA screening across all directorates. This ensured that consideration of our equality duty obligations is embedded into working practices across the council.
- 3.15 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty (annually); and to set specific, measurable objectives (at least every four years) to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

3.16 New equality objectives were set in 2021 and some examples of how we are meeting our objectives are outlined below. We have based our equality objectives on five of the outcomes within our Council Plan 2021-24.

3.17 **Healthy Barnsley:** People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible. The number of people accessing our reablement services, and therefore allowing more people to remain independent at home for longer has positively increased over the last year. 1161 people have accessed reablement in 2021/22, this is an increase of 62.8% compared to the previous year and above the target of 1000.

Mental Health Support Teams have provided activities relating to healthy peer relationships, physical health, and mental health, across 11 secondary schools and over 20 primary schools.

We have developed and supported age friendly projects and events including 'Take a Seat Barnsley' which provides additional seating in various locations across the borough to encourage more older people to get out and about.

Recovery College have to set-up a support group for people who identify as trans, which aims to provide a safe and confidential space where trans people can receive the support they need to reduce the risk of suicidality or suicide ideation.

3.18 **Learning Barnsley:** Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.

Work has been undertaken with schools to ensure they are correctly identifying the level of SEN provision and support for children and young people at the earliest opportunity. As a result, Barnsley has positively increased the number of children and young people receiving SEN support to 10.9%.

68.2% of young people leaving care were in education, employment, or training, around the time of their birthday. Although performance is slightly lower than 2020/21 (71.2%), it remains above target (65%), and significantly above both the national (52%) and statistical neighbour (50.1%) averages for 2020/21.

We have bridged the gap in pay for young people transferring to an apprenticeship from the Youth Employment Programme with the council, allowing young people to progress to apprenticeship at the same rate of pay as they were receiving on the Youth Employment Programme.

3.19 **Growing Barnsley:** People have a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure, and culture.

The new Glass Works Square has significantly enhanced the accessibility and connectivity of Barnsley Town Centre. Footfall showed positive trends across 2021/22.

AccessAble Surveyors completed an annual review of Barnsley's access guides, creating 13 new guides in 2021-22 (264 total). These guides provide disabled people with details of what access is like in, and around, different venues and sites across the borough and are available (free of charge) through the website or the AccessAble app.

Barnsley's disability equality forums ('My Barnsley Too' and 'Thursday's Voice') have moved their meetings to a venue in the town centre. This has had a positive impact on members as they have become more confident in visiting the town centre and now regularly visit the library or market kitchen cafes for lunch after the meetings.

- 3.20 Sustainable Barnsley: People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.

We now allow the use of larger vehicles in our Household Waste and Recycling Centres. This positively increased access to recycling and household waste facilities for disabled residents as they often need larger vehicles to accommodate equipment.

An awareness raising campaign was developed to increase the recycling of pots, tubs and trays. Pictures and imagery were used to increase the accessibility of this information for people who may face barriers to reading information in written English (including limited English speakers and some disabled people).

- 3.21 Enabling Barnsley: We are a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive, and high-performing council.

A recently developed wellbeing calendar enables us to celebrate key equality, diversity, and inclusion events throughout the year. This will help us to promote inclusion and raise awareness of key issues with our workforce and with members of the community.

In February 2022, we celebrated LGBTQ+ History Month by sharing a variety of content on social media, successfully increasing our reach (3%) and engagement (26%) on the previous year. We also published two articles internally to raise awareness amongst employees and promote our online equality, diversity, and inclusion courses, including Trans Awareness. We have also set up our first employee network group for LGBTQ+ employees.

Linked to our health and wellbeing agenda we also launched a range of initiatives around menopause awareness, including online training and an employee support network. We continue to promote activities to line managers who are likely to encounter colleagues and family members of different ages who are experiencing menopause symptoms.

The People Strategy is key to support our aim to Be Even Better and the Enabling Barnsley priority as part of Barnsley 2030, the Council Plan, and our long-term vision for Barnsley. The Strategy is supported by an action plan into which equality related key actions are embedded. One of the key actions is the development of a diversity and inclusion action plan, with the intention for this to be overseen by the Organisational Development Board. This is currently being finalised, with work already underway on priority actions.

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