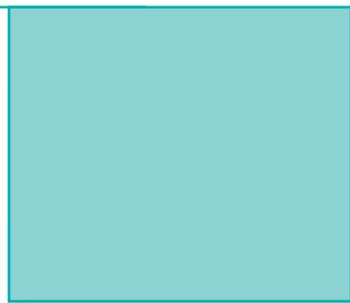


Executive summary

2007/08 – 2010/11



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You can read this report on our website. www.barnet.gov.uk.

There is also an accessible version of the scheme.

The Equality Delivery Plan accompanying this scheme will be published separately in autumn 2007. However, if anyone would like a copy of the draft plan please call Julie Pal on 020 8359 7263.

Please call us on 020 8359 7263 if you would like extra copies of this report in large print, Braille, on tape or another language.

Foreword by Councillor Mike Freer, Leader of Barnet Council

Welcome to Barnet Council's Equality Scheme 2007/8 -2010/11. We are proud to publish a document which shows how serious the council is in putting the community first.

As a council we want to promote equality in it's widest sense and also be sensitive to how services can affect people differently depending on their age, faith/belief and sexual orientation.

This is an ambitious scheme because it assesses the impact of our corporate priorities on Barnet's diverse communities and we want to be sure everyone in Barnet benefits from our improved council. Our track record of success has been recognised in the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment of the council, which ranked us a four star authority ('performing well') and praised our well

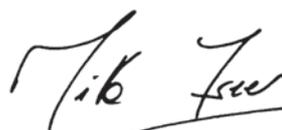
developed approach to diversity and our strong relationships with the many different communities in Barnet.

As the Leader of the Council, I am delighted that 87 percent of residents agree the council is doing a good

job, but we need to do more and this is reflected in the scheme. Feedback from residents such as through my 'Leader Listens' conversations is important for the council in setting future priorities for improvements.

I believe Barnet's Equality Scheme will make an important contribution towards our understanding of the needs and aspirations of our diverse communities and contribute to our desire to become a successful city-suburb.

In September 2006 I stated that "equalities is integral to everything the council does." Nine months on, publication of Barnet's Equality Scheme is proof of that commitment.



Councillor Mike Freer
Leader of Barnet Council



Executive summary



Context

1. Barnet is a successful multicultural city-suburb contributing to London's global success. It is the tenth largest unitary authority, twentieth most ethnically diverse and second most religiously diverse area in England. As a council we recognise that discrimination and inequalities affect people in complex ways, so our first single Equality Scheme will show not only how we will meet our statutory responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality, but also be sensitive to how services can affect people differently depending on their age, faith/belief and sexual orientation.
2. We are a diverse borough. Our population boasts the largest Jewish and Chinese communities in England. 50,000 of our residents have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which affects their daily activities. Nearly 6,000 people in Barnet are visually impaired and 7,000 are hard of hearing. 80,000 of our residents are currently aged less than 19 years and this number is expected to rise by 4.5 percent

by 2016. 134 languages are spoken by our primary school children. Our over 65 population totals nearly 45,000. Our current population is almost 330,000 and expected to rise to 360,000 by 2016 because of the 16,000 new homes being built.

3. This new community will reflect London's diversity. The Muslim community is likely to increase noticeably as a result of its present comparatively young age structure. This rate of change is different from other groups.
4. We are also a borough of contrasts. We have many areas of prosperity sitting alongside significant pockets of deprivation clustered along the A5 corridor. Residents living in these areas suffer more from higher crime, lower educational attainment, higher unemployment and poorer health. In some areas life expectancy can vary by as much as four years between the most affluent and most deprived areas.

Barnet's values

5. We know that people have a multiple range of identities to which we must respond flexibly

and appropriately. The national debates of identity and the creation of a new equalities framework have inspired us to publish a combined Equality Scheme.

6. We want to make Barnet a better place for current and future generations. We want Barnet to play its part on the wider stage as a successful city-suburb in London. We need to work with our partners to understand the needs and aspirations of our diverse communities. Only then can we provide excellent public services which offer value for money and maximum choice.
7. These values are outlined in our Corporate Plan 2007/08 – 2010/11. Our Equality Scheme is aligned to our Corporate Plan. It will assess the impact of our corporate priorities on our communities and act as a catalyst to ensure those priorities are delivered to all sections of Barnet's communities.
8. Barnet Council is successful at promoting social cohesion. We believe this is because we deliver quality public services which meet people's essential needs and that these form the building blocks to create an integrated and tolerant society. 87 percent of our

residents are satisfied with living in our borough. Our participation in the Stonewall Diversity programme will further increase our ambition to be an employer of choice

Promoting race equality

9. To promote race equality the council must promote equality of opportunity, challenge discrimination and promote good relations between people from different racial groups. During the summer of 2006, over a quarter of white residents felt the council was doing too much to protect the rights of people from different communities, a feeling shared by Muslim and Hindu communities. Work is commencing to improve our understanding of the factors behind this new finding.
10. All residents believe the most important areas to promote race equality are crime and safety (71%), housing (50%), health (45%), consultations on council policies (36%) and improving communication between the council (29%).
11. Asking black and minority ethnic (BME) residents to prioritise the council services they believed were in most need of improving, there was a slightly

different emphasis. They chose: consultations on council policies (43%), housing (42%), complaints about council services (27%), improving communications between the council (25%) and contacting and accessing council services (21%). Relevant activities consistent with the Corporate Plan and measures of success are included in our Equality Delivery Plan which will be published in autumn 2007.

12. Our workforce analysis shows that 23 percent of our workforce are from BME communities, who

make up 26 percent of the local population as a whole.

Promoting disability equality

13. The duty to promote disability equality requires the council to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate harassment and discrimination, promote positive attitudes, encourage the participation of disabled people in active life and take steps to favourably treat a disabled person.



14. The council has adopted the social model of disability. It is committed to the Government's 2025 vision that disabled people will have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society.
15. Disabled residents believe the council could do more to protect the rights of disabled people. They believe the top five areas to promote disability equality are: Transport (77%), crime and safety issues (58%), issues affecting education for disabled children and young people (53%), housing (50%) and health (50%).
16. When asked to list council services most in need of improving to promote disability equality, they chose housing (38%), contacting and accessing council services (34%), improving access to leisure services (27%), consultation on council policies (24%), making enquiries about council services (22%). Relevant activities consistent with the Corporate Plan and measures of success are included in the Equality Delivery Plan

17. Two percent of council staff identify themselves with a disability. This is much lower than our local population. A priority for 2007/8 is to encourage disabled people to apply for job vacancies and work experience in the council, and to work with existing disabled staff to ensure they are supported effectively to give their best performance in the workplace.

Promoting gender equality

18. We will promote gender equality by proactively eliminating sex discrimination and harassment and promote equality for women and men in the workforce.
19. In terms of the workforce, our gender equality work will focus primarily on addressing career opportunities and pay distribution of women. Analysis of pay distribution from 2005 shows a marked difference between male and female staff based on gender and working patterns. 76 percent of the council's workforce is female compared to 52 percent of the population. However, only 42 percent of full-time equivalent female employees hold senior grade jobs. 49 percent of Barnet's employees work part-time. Of these, 92 percent are female.

Female employees are clustered in low-paid, part-time work. Our Human Resources Business Strategy will seek to analyse further the reasons behind this and enhance flexible working practices that best meet the needs of the organisation.

20. We also want to use the gender duty to tackle systematic discrimination more effectively. In order to tackle gender equality the prevalence of gender-based violence in society must be acknowledged and addressed. This impacts on women's safety and well-being, their mental and physical health, their earning capacity, their career, their access to services, their role in public life, their families and communities. Domestic violence accounts for 25 percent of violent crime in Barnet. The Safer Communities Strategy will specifically address violence against women and ensure a proactive response through coordinated action across agencies.

Partnerships

21. Our residents have told us what their priorities for improvement are. As a community leader we understand their aspirations and priorities and will use this

understanding to inform and influence our partners to work with us to meet our equalities responsibilities.

22. Our shared priorities will be stated in all key partnership documents and will play a role in promoting cohesion. Some practical examples of community cohesion include:

- Barnet Multifaith Forum has worked with our regeneration partners in the £4.2bn redevelopment of the Cricklewood/Brent Cross area, advising of the impact upon faith communities. They have also trained social workers about the multifaith considerations of child protection.
- Barnet Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network is working with our local LGBT community to increase third party reporting of hate crime.
- Barnet Traveller Forum has been working with local travelling communities who are now settled in Barnet. The forum is working with members of this community to encourage the adults to support their children and young people in achieving their educational potential.
- Barnet Domestic Violence Forum has been raising awareness

about the horrors of forced marriage and domestic violence within south Asian communities. Community tensions are monitored through the Strategic Multi Agency Racial Harassment Group.

Action planning and monitoring

23. Monitoring equalities performance will be integrated into the council's existing performance management process. Regular monitoring of progress against the equality delivery plans are undertaken on an exception basis. The Equality Standard for Local Government will measure equalities performance. The council is expected to achieve Level 4 by March 2008. Our Race Equality Scheme score is 73.68 percent.
24. The improvement priorities ranked by residents will feed into our Equality Delivery Plan. The activities and measures identified reflect the performance measures stated in our current Corporate Plan and Key Priority Plans. The baseline data against which progress is measured will be captured from a variety of sources including Barnet Primary Care Trust and the Diversity Monitoring Form.

25. The impact on residents will be measured using satisfaction ratings and resident feedback on service improvement priorities, initially for identified inequalities, but eventually to gather evidence of other inequalities which may arise because of a person's mix of identities. Actions to reduce these inequalities will form part of the Equality Delivery Plan which will be published in the autumn of 2007.
26. Barnet Disability Equality Advisory Group has been set up to secure the improved engagement of disabled people. It will provide annual feedback to our Adult Strategy Group and corporate Equalities and Diversity Group.



