

Report of: Strategy & Review Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 3rd April 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Social Inclusion Strategy



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: To present the draft Oxford City Council Social Inclusion Strategy.



Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Dan Paskins

Scrutiny Responsibility: Community



Area(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:



Councillor Dan Paskins – Portfolio Holder

Jan Banfield – Strategy & Review Unit



Amy Thomas – Legal and Democratic Services



Policy Framework:

Oxford Plan 2006-09 priority to 'reduce inequalities through social inclusion'.



Recommendation(s):

1. To note and comment on the contents of the report and the attached Social Inclusion Strategy.
2. To endorse the priorities for action and underpinning principles in the Council's approach to promoting social inclusion.
3. To approve the Social Inclusion Strategy and the incorporated action plan 2006-07.

1. This report briefly summarises the draft Social Inclusion Strategy (attached). The strategy was written following a cross-Unit Officers' workshop on 31st January 2006 and circulation to relevant Council Officers and Members.
2. The Strategy identifies key issues for the Council to prioritise and proposes principles to underpin the work. At this stage the Strategy does not contain a detailed plan of additional initiatives to undertake. As noted below, there is already a considerable amount of work being undertaken to address social exclusion. Therefore this Strategy outlines an action plan to support improved service delivery by ensuring that these priorities and principles are implemented in its current and future work.
3. The Oxford Plan 2006-09 identifies that working with partners to '*reduce inequalities through social inclusion*' is a priority for the Council. It should seek to use the delivery of its mainstream services and its power under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to promote social inclusion in the City.
4. A review of the available evidence suggests the following areas as priorities for action in Oxford City. These priorities indicate where the Council should target most of its resource when working with partners to tackle social exclusion outside its statutory remit.
 - 17 Super Output Areas which are in the 30% most deprived areas nationally
 - Crime
 - Children and young people's education & skills
 - Child poverty
 - Social exclusion among black and minority ethnic groups
 - Homelessness (including rough sleeping)
5. The following are proposed as key principles which will underpin the Council's approach to promoting social inclusion:
 - (i) All social inclusion initiatives must be evidence-based and provide value for money
 - (ii) All Council services must be inclusive and there must be a corporate approach to social inclusion
 - (iii) The Council will work with partner agencies and involve local people in decision-making
 - (iv) Mainstream services and targeted initiatives can both promote social inclusion
 - (v) As well as tackling social exclusion, the Council will work to prevent people from becoming socially excluded
6. As part of the development of this Strategy an exercise was undertaken to map out the current social inclusion-related activity undertaken by or funded by the Council. This exercise identified over 70 services and initiatives. Whilst it is clear that there is already a large

amount of activity being undertaken, it is not clear to what extent it is consistent with the principles proposed in this Strategy, or to what extent it duplicates provision.

7. In order to implement the priorities and principles outlined in the Strategy, the following is recommended as an initial action plan for 2006-07.
 - An audit of current social inclusion-related services and initiatives to support the implementation of the priorities and principles outlined in the Strategy. The audit findings will feed into the next business planning cycle due to commence in April 2006 and result in measurable outputs to support the social inclusion priority being documented in the Oxford Plan 2007-10.
 - Strategic work with partner agencies to gain agreement on the importance of promoting social inclusion to reduce inequality in Oxford and on the approach outlined in this strategy. The Oxford Strategic Partnership has already endorsed undertaking an audit as described above on a cross-agency basis.
 - Exploring how Area Committees can help to implement the proposals in this Strategy for focussing on particular areas of deprivation and involving local people in the design and implementation of social inclusion initiatives.
 - Developing a monitoring framework with a view to producing periodic reports monitoring trends in social inclusion outcomes and the effectiveness of our services and initiatives.

Name and contact details of author:

Mark Fransham
Policy Officer (Social Inclusion & Health Inequalities)
Strategy & Review Unit
Oxford City Council

01865 252797
mfransham@oxford.gov.uk



Background papers:

'Closing the Gap': Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 22nd March 2005

'Social Inclusion – Closing the Gap': Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th July 2005

