

Integrating Equalities into Local Area Agreements

This Paper summarises the learning generated by participants at the LAA PLUS Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshops: Dreaming of Equality. Two events were held in Manchester and London on 25th and 26th June respectively, bringing together a rich mix of different areas and partners with different experiences of promoting equalities through LAAs.

This paper sets out:

- An introduction to the current debate around equalities and links to Community Cohesion
- The new policy context
- The Equality Impact Assessment Process
- Case studies highlighting how equalities have been addressed in different areas

1. Introducing Equalities

Inequality can alter life experiences and consequently result in individuals and groups having **different perceptions** of their local area. This can sometimes be sharply divisive and the cause of community tensions.

However, "equality does not mean sameness, nor should an equal society try to force everybody into the same mould" ([The National Equalities Review, 2007](#)). Equality must recognise diversity; once this is recognised at the strategic decision making level, it can act as a **driver** for enhanced community cohesion and integration.

The pursuit of equality is about **empowering people**, something which central Government has made a priority through the [Empowerment White Paper, Communities in control: real people, real power, July 2008](#).

A more equal society delivers stability and prosperity, increases our well-being, and enhances everyone's life chances and achievements without constraining those of anybody else.

"Promoting equality is essential for individuals to fulfil their potential, for the creation of a cohesive society and for a strong economy." - Framework for a Fairer Future – The Equality Bill, June 2008

Equalities issues can potentially underpin all 35 indicators in an LAA as well as any additional local indicators; and there is a **growing recognition of the need to explicitly address equalities aspects in relation to their delivery**.

For example, in areas where the school population is highly diverse, delivering against NI 87 Secondary school persistent absence rate, will require targeted approaches if certain groups are more likely to miss school than others, for example if boys, compared to girls, from certain ethnic backgrounds are more likely to miss school.

"An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be."

[The National Equalities Review, 2007](#)

The biggest driver of continuing disadvantage and inequality remains **social-economic status**. For example, educational attainment and health outcomes are still strongly shaped by socio-economic status and social class. However, there are other factors that affect particular groups; **gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, and sexual orientation** can all be specific triggers of discrimination and disadvantage.

The Link with Community Cohesion

In February 2008 Communities and Local Government (CLG) set out a new definition of community cohesion and a statement on **how cohesion fits with equality**.

"Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another."

CLG also set out a vision of an integrated and cohesive community:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Equality and diversity are an integral part of this process, and to achieve this, both equality and diversity need to be put in place to ensure **new and existing residents adapt to one another and get on well together**.

CLG has signalled its commitment to community cohesion, covered by PSA 21 to build cohesive, empowered and active communities which will be measured by:

- The percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- The percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
- The percentage of people who have meaningful interactions with people from different backgrounds.

The first two measures are also part of the National Indicator Set with eighty seven areas choosing the first measure and seven choosing the second. Both will be measured by the Place Survey and the third nationally by the Citizenship Survey.

2. Policy Context

Britain has more advanced and effective equality legislation than most other countries supported by a robust institutional framework encompassing the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Disability Rights Commission (DRC), the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).

The Equality Standard for Local Government has also enabled local authorities to set up a **framework to mainstream equalities into service delivery and employment**. The Standard divides equality into six strands:

1. age
2. disability
3. gender
4. race
5. religion and belief
6. sexual orientation

There were previously three separate equality duties on public bodies: on race (2000), disability (2005) and gender (2006) and public bodies were required to produce Equality Schemes covering these. This helped public bodies focus on the way their spending decisions, employment practices and service delivery affects local people whatever their race, disability or gender.

In order to address equality and diversity in a more streamlined way and to integrate more with the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Government published the **Single Equality Bill on 26th June 2008**.

The new duty brings together the three existing duties on race, disability and gender and extends to **gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief**. The duty will require public bodies to consider how their policies, programmes and services affect different groups in the community.

This will have a direct impact on the LAA and LAA Implementation Plans. For example, providing extra park benches in local parks enabling older people to benefit from public spaces or targeting a diabetes awareness-raising campaign at South Asian people after identifying that they are at greater risk of developing the disease.

The Equality Duty will also require public bodies to tackle discrimination and promote equality through **their purchasing functions**.

3. Equalities and Local Area Agreements

"During the LAA process, the needs of all different groups within the locality (not just those to whom there is a statutory duty) need to be taken into account. Understanding the people in a locality is an important step in delivering local services which serve all groups appropriately."

Progressing Equalities through the new LAAs,
A "No Nonsense" Guide

Local partnerships will need to consider the extent to which the evidence they are using enables them to take into account the needs of all different groups of people in the community and assess the extent to which priorities have an impact on them. This may highlight the need for an **impact assessment** or **disaggregating targets** in support of priorities for particular groups to avoid the risk of the equalities gap widening.

Equality Impact Assessments

Undertaking equality impact assessments (EqIAs) of policies, service delivery and employment will help local authorities and their partners develop a clear set of equality objectives.

EqIAs are a way of **systematically assessing and consulting on the effects a policy, service or strategy is likely to have on people**. Ideally EqIAs should be developed at the same time as a new policy, service or strategy is created, pre-empting the possibility that it could disadvantage some groups on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexuality and religion or belief.

EqIAs can therefore be a way of examining the main content of the LAA to see whether it has the potential to impact differently on local groups or communities. However, in many cases it may be too late to carry out a full impact assessment on an LAA but this can be done on **LAA Implementation Plans**, with some arguing that this is actually the best place to carry out an assessment.

"What's important now are the programmes that will deliver LAA targets, these programmes will need equality proofing." – Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

Salford City Council

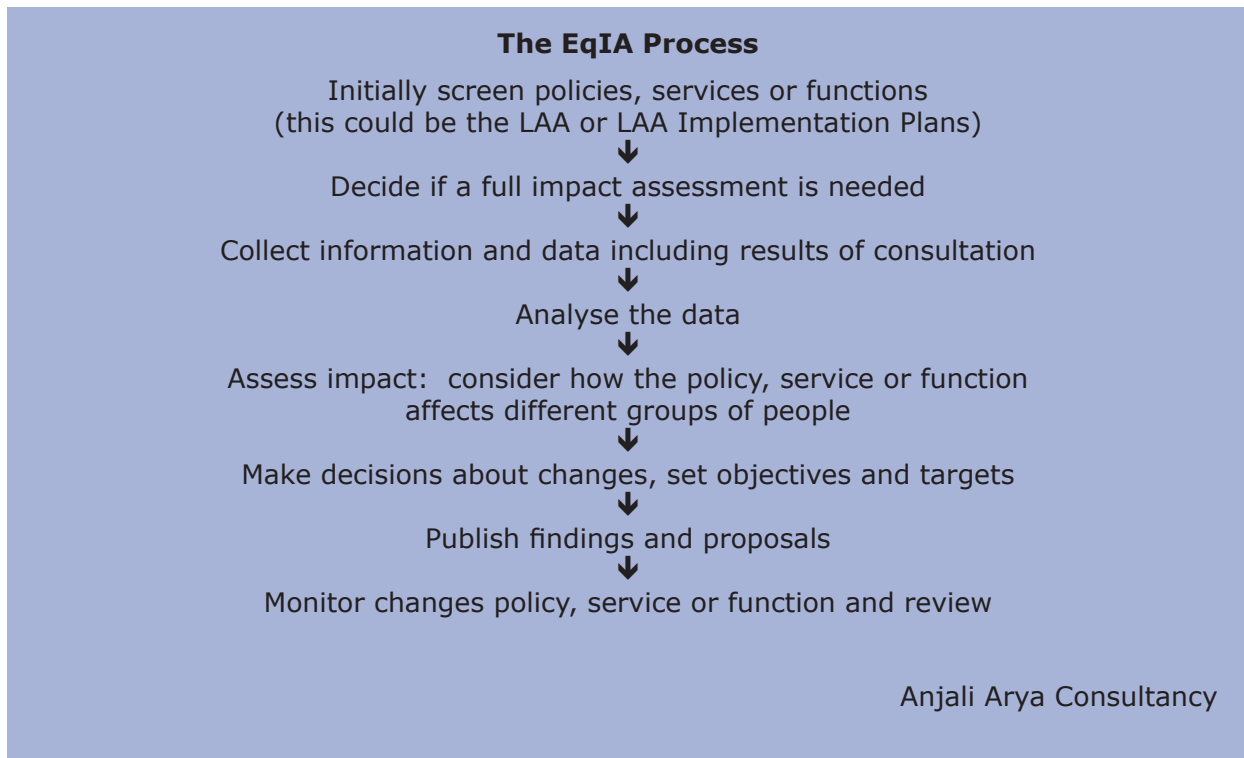
Salford is currently considering a series of measures which will help incorporate equalities and diversity into their LAA Implementation Plan:

1. Through its project management system Salford is developing a delivery model for the LAA which includes 5 workstreams called **"Thinks"** on key areas such as Neighbourhoods, Skills and Work, and Family. **Delivery boards** are also being developed for key enabling drivers such as strategic commissioning, partnership working and performance management, and community engagement and empowerment. Each "Think" board and project delivery group will have a supporting project manager. Equalities is not a specific workstream or board but it is likely to be identified as one of the **specific cross-cutting themes** which all projects will need to progress to and support. The initial plan is for project managers to be advised by equalities "experts" drawn from across the partnership so they are fully aware of where and when equalities (including any legal obligations) need to be built into the process.
2. An **action plan for integrating equalities into the LAA** has been drafted by Salford City Council Corporate Lead Officer Group for Equalities. This proposes a series of actions over 2008-09 which includes a full EqIA on the LAA.
3. The LSP support team and the Council Equalities team have tailored the Government Equalities Office EqIA toolkit to produce an **audit** of Salford's current position with regards to equalities and the LAA. Several key officers in the LSP support team and Council have been interviewed and the results collated. The resulting **Statement of Position** will inform the partnership what gaps need to be addressed.
4. Salford City Council's Policy and Improvement Team has recently contacted partners to ascertain what **disaggregated data** they can provide for the headline LAA indicators, for example by neighbourhood, age, and school. Measurement of the chosen disaggregated indicators will be introduced into the performance management system for the updated Salford Agreement in late 2008.

Services should be built around a **robust analysis and understanding of diverse needs**, against the context of diverse localities. Through LAA implementation plans local partners need to ensure that the actions and interventions they are planning are the right ones to reduce inequality and promote diversity.

In order to do this effectively baseline population and employee profiles need to be researched and compared with regularly updated sets of data taking into account gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. **Managers need to be trained** and **corporate equality impact assessment plans developed**.

Effective community engagement and consultation activities also need to be developed in order to deliver equality and diversity. The EqIA process should involve the systematic participation of the community, staff and stakeholder groups. These will play an important part in identifying any **unmet need** or **adverse impact** of a policy or strategy.



The purpose of an EqIA is **to make changes by identifying ways of reducing or eradicating any adverse impact** on communities or groups by setting objectives and targets for improving that policy, service or function.

However, different authorities, and different public bodies, have gone about the EqIA process and meeting the Equality Duties in different ways. This is, in part, due to the lack of guidance from central government.

"There's a lack of guidance from Government so different processes are being developed in different areas which isn't necessarily a bad thing but does mean you are working through the fog and unsure what the best approach to take is."
– Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

LB Hammersmith and Fulham

LB Hammersmith and Fulham have approached equalities through a 4-stage process:

1. Retrospective Equalities Impact Assessment
2. Predictive Equalities Impact Assessment
3. Full Equalities Impact Assessment
4. Budgetary Equalities Impact Assessment

Each EqIA is the responsibility of one individual, usually the service manager for the particular issue or function being assessed. This allows a degree of ownership over each assessment.

Great People, Great Place, Great Prospects Sandwell MBC

Sandwell had been using a standard 5 stage process EqIA, similar to that used by the PCT. However, this process was internally focused which resulted in the EqIA being seen as a duty, with outcomes and required actions slow to be followed through.

In order to strengthen the EqIA process, the PCT and local authority decided to streamline the two and are planning to use the **new streamlined EqIA** to assess Sandwell's LAA Implementation Plan. The streamlined EqIA process is also aimed at **getting partners to work together** to achieve LAA targets.

The new EqIA has 4 main stages:

1. The first stage looks at the **risk of inequality and discrimination** on a broad scale, taking into account all groups at risk of inequality – through age, race, gender, religion or belief, disability and sexual orientation.
2. The second stage focuses on **identifying gaps**. This stage examines existing evidence, for example, if evidence shows that there has been a reduction of domestic violence in Sandwell and this has not been the case amongst Asian women, the EqIA will find out why.
3. The third stage looks at **proxy indicators and possible interventions** to fill equality gaps.
4. The fourth stage focuses on **promoting the interventions** identified at stage 3 and **holding the partnership accountable** for inequality gaps.

Linking the EqIA process to the LAA is essential to ensure that needs are **owned and reviewed** by the partnership and outcomes achieved. The Partnership was already aware that Sandwell suffers from widespread poverty and disadvantage, the EqIA will now enable the partnership to identify where disproportions occur which will result in more **targeted improvements**.

A significant part of Sandwell's new approach to the EqIA is the **outcome-based accountability model** developed by Mark Friedman (How to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities, 2005). The model starts at the end working backwards from outcomes, assessing what steps need to be taken to reach those outcomes.

The outcome-based accountability model aims to make issues understandable and accessible to both policy officers and residents. This then assumes that if residents understand the outcomes partners are trying to achieve through the LAA, they will realise their importance and are therefore more likely to make an effort to achieve the outcomes. The principal behind the approach is to **share evidence with the community and assess what can be achieved collectively**. Breaking issues down to the lowest common denominator ensures that everyone can make a small change in order to collectively make a significant improvement to the local area.

Equalities can also mean different things to different people. Allowing local partners to undergo the same **training** will ensure they have a **shared understanding** of the issues and processes.

Equality issues change over time as populations change; they therefore need to be **revisited at agreed stages** throughout the process. This can be done, for example, during the LAA refresh processes or whenever a new policy or strategy is produced as a result of the LAA. Evidence from this can then be used to see what other interventions need to take place to meet LAA targets.

EqIAs can also be undertaken at the end of the 3 year LAA to assess if it has met the needs of different groups in the community.

Spatial planning strategies and decision-making can also have significant implications for patterns of inequality, for example when new private sector investment and public facilities are located away from poorer neighbourhoods. The LDF therefore needs to support the implementation of the LAA and SCS.

The ultimate aim of integrating equalities into LAAs and of conducting EqIAs is to **deliver continuous improvement in local areas that is focused on outcomes**. Chief Executives, Leaders and Cabinet members recognising the importance of mainstreaming equality is crucial to this success.

4. Comprehensive Area Assessment

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will focus on how well public bodies **understand and meet the needs of communities** in assessing the future prospects for local areas and quality of life for residents. An understanding of equality and diversity will underpin this.

"A strong focus on equality and diversity encourages the continual improvement in public services and ensures that they meet the changing needs of diverse communities and provide fair access for all."

Audit Commission

CAA will address:

- How well a partnership understands and assesses the needs of its communities now and in the future;
- If this understanding is used to inform its local priorities;
- If the partnership organises itself to ensure it has the capacity to deliver these priorities;
- If the partnership has secure and effective arrangements to identify and manage the risks to achieving successful outcomes; and
- If improved outcomes are likely to be achieved.

Understanding and responding to the needs of communities, particularly vulnerable communities, places the principles of equality and diversity *"at the heart of the assessment"*.

CAA stresses the work of local authorities and their partners in reducing inequalities. However, this should not be the only driver in pushing forward the equalities agenda in local government.

5. Governance Arrangements and Partnership Working

As with conducting EqIAs, there is little guidance from central government on governance arrangements for equalities and diversity resulting in a mixed picture in many local areas.

Some local areas have set up task and finish groups which report directly to the LSP, others have integrated equalities into LAA Performance Boards.

However, in many cases responsibility for equality and diversity rests with a number of officers. If it is to be mainstreamed, the **whole partnership** needs to take over this responsibility.

The Coventry Partnership

The Equalities and Community Cohesion Theme Group (E&CC) is part of Coventry's Local Strategic Partnership – the Coventry Partnership. It aims to promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate all forms of intolerance. The group has representatives from Coventry City Council's Corporate Policy Team, West Midlands Police, the Coventry Ethnic Minority Action Partnership and the Voluntary and Community Sector amongst others.

As part of the LSP, the Chair of the E&CC was one of the main partners involved in pulling together the key priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA thereby ensuring that both strategies addressed issues of equality.

An **LAA Indicator Action Plan** is currently being produced by the partnership team for every indicator. Each plan will include a section on whether it is appropriate to disaggregate data to examine the impact on specific groups in the community.

The E&CC has commissioned a piece of research looking at the impact of equalities in Coventry. Learning from the research is being disseminated at a number of **workshops with key stakeholders**. The workshops focus on examples of good practice, for example what makes community cohesion a reality? What does success look like?

The workshops have involved a **range of partners** – both people with an expertise or interest in equality and cohesion and also service planners, commissioners and deliverers. The final session was a large community meeting with representatives from faith groups, the voluntary and community sector and residents. This enabled partnership representatives to find out what issues matter most to local people.

From the research and the workshops the E&CC plans to develop **practical guidance on integrating equalities through the LAA** and work with the other theme groups of the LSP on particular indicators. The guidance will also enable service commissioners, planners and deliverers to think about equality and cohesion issues at an early stage and help to mainstream equalities into service delivery.

The Partnership is planning to carry out an equality impact assessment on their **theme plans** going through each on **an indicator by indicator basis** rather than thematically. The Partnership has very much taken the view that every indicator has an equality dimension and therefore each should be measured accordingly.

"One or two indicators can never address equality and cohesion; the LAA will be an equality strategy." – Member of the Equality and Community Cohesion Theme Group.

Seeking success in reducing inequalities in the future will have implications for **partnership leadership and management**. For example, partners will have to:

- Strengthen **performance management** within the LAA;
- Determine the importance of **neighbourhood working** and **community engagement**;
- Ensure adequate resources for **research and analysis** to support delivery within the new LAA; and
- Consider **structures within the LSP** for addressing inequalities.

Meeting the demands of new equalities legislation will also require much greater priority in **improving equalities data** in a consistent way across partner organisations.

6. Challenges and Barriers

There is a perception that public bodies are **under scrutiny** when equality impact assessments are carried out. This is often a practical barrier for officers who have a role in promoting equality and mainstreaming equalities considerations.

"...recent history has associated the idea of equality with bureaucratic finger-wagging and legal restriction."

[The National Equalities Review, 2007](#)

"There's a negative message nationally around inspection." – Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

"The focus has shifted towards extremism and looking at negative impacts rather than issues that will contribute to cohesion and diversity." – Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

It is seen as an oppressive process rather than a liberating one. This may also be a result of the language used and associations with the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and CAA processes.

However, equalities should not be seen as an assessment but as a way of **helping local areas achieve their LAA priorities** – it can act as a driver for change.

It will be essential for the successful delivery of LAAs for local partnerships to investigate the extent to which **disaggregated targets** should be set at neighbourhood level and for different groups and communities. Serious **limitations in many of the national datasets** and significant potential costs in filling gaps locally will make this a big challenge.

"It is difficult to map need. We default to the 2001 census but populations have changed." – Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

"There are no decent or robust baselines. This means we can't disaggregate data to get to the real issues and means we're missing the boat on closing the gap." – Participant at the Equalities Peer-to-Peer Challenge Workshop

New equality and diversity strategies also need actions that acknowledge the complexities of personal identity and place. This is increasingly difficult in the face of **rapid social change and diversification**, and without a supporting evidence base.

Gathering and analysing data on the most disadvantaged people can also be problematic as they may often not be included in official statistics. To help with this, local partnerships could research the options for **resourcing research and analytical capacity needs within the voluntary and community sector**. This would also ensure that the sector is making a full contribution to the LAA process.

Voluntary and community sector organisations could also provide support during the equality impact assessment process. For example Age Concern Norfolk carried out an impact assessment of Norfolk's LAA on the gay and lesbian population in Norfolk.

A further key challenge is **engaging elected members** and ensuring their support for equalities and diversity across the LAA. Mapping needs to priorities and supporting this with a robust evidence base will help engage elected members.

If equality is going to be a driver for change it needs to be supported by robust baselines and disaggregated data. Equality must relate to the issues and areas of people's lives where they **experience disadvantage and inequality and reflect the main freedoms, activities and outcomes** that they value – this has to be measured if the LAA is to make a difference.

7. Case Studies

Ensuring Equality in Oldham's LAA

Understanding the people who live in Oldham was an important part of developing the borough's new LAA and the accompanying new sustainable community strategy.

The need to consider equality and diversity, and the **impact of decisions** on various parts of the Oldham community was recognised by Oldham's LSP. The partnership has approximately 100 members and there was broad involvement in the development of the agreement to reflect the borough's diversity.

The partnership is now considering how to embed the principles of equality and ensure that no sections of the community are adversely affected by the LAA.

Working towards community cohesion through the LAA

One of four crosscutting issues identified in Oldham's LAA is **community cohesion**. This is in recognition of the fact that the borough is home to people from many different social and cultural backgrounds, with a wide variety of experiences. Whilst the LAA indicators relating to building a cohesive society are housed in the 'safe and strong communities' theme of the LAA, a focus on this issue informs every aspect of activity **and runs right across** the LAA. For example, a **Community Cohesion Advisory Group** serves the entire LSP as a source of expert advice. Each block of Oldham's first LAA had their delivery plans assessed by the Advisory Group to ensure they implicitly or explicitly contributed to building community cohesion.

Building an equalities impact assessment rationale into the LAA

An initial equalities impact assessment will now be completed on the LAA. A **Steering Group will be set up to undertake this work**, which will be accountable to the council's Assistant Director of Communities and will include a representative – from any of the LAA partners - of each of the six equality strands. This Group will ensure an initial broad assessment of the whole agreement takes place, either undertaken by the group itself, or by a small working group. This will identify any gaps in provision for the six equality strands. The Steering Group will then make a decision about whether to commission an equalities impact assessment from an external party, and, if they do decide to, will develop a clearly defined brief driven by the initial assessment.

The **Partnership Support Group**, a strategic group comprising representatives from across the partnership, will take high-level responsibility for ensuring that equality and diversity issues retain a high profile throughout the life of the LAA.

Equalities within the LAA commissioning process

Equalities and diversity continues to be an integral part of Oldham's decision-making processes and as the partnership begins to commission activities.

Oldham Partnership has developed a **framework for the strategic commissioning of funds**. This ensures that it spends on the partnership's strategic priorities as identified in the LAA, and really drives delivery in the borough.

Oldham's ambition as a partnership is to take an increasingly **cross-cutting** approach to commissioning, to make commissioning more strategic and to make an impact on a concentrated set of issues.

An equalities impact assessment rationale is embedded throughout the commissioning process, building on the approach taken for programmes such as SRB 4 and 6 and NRF.

The initial stages of the commissioning process are:

1. A delivery plan is formulated for each block of the LAA, and a lead identified for each target.
2. With support from the LAA commissioning unit, the target lead puts together a business case for undertaking activity to contribute to achieving specific LAA targets.
3. A suite of commissioning documents is drawn up, including a specification and expression of interest form, and potential delivery agents are asked to submit their

expressions of interest in undertaking the activity. Where the activity may have a significant negative impact on certain groups of people, prospective delivery agents can be asked to consider how this impact could be alleviated in their expression of interest.

4. An assessment panel then selects a delivery agent and they, together with the target lead and the commissioning unit, draw up a delivery agreement. This delivery agreement includes a statement of how equalities and diversity have been, and will be, taken into account.

The impact on the designated equalities groups is considered at all stages of the commissioning process, rather than being an add-on.

Commissioning Unit Team members support the commissioning process, but also serve to challenge target leads and delivery agents on how they will **minimise the negative impact** of the activity. So, rather than equality and diversity officers being responsible for assessing the impact of activities, the **officers responsible for delivery** are encouraged to take ownership of this.

Identifying and Addressing Inequalities in Brighton and Hove

The Reducing Inequality Review

Work to address inequalities in Brighton and Hove began with the *Reducing Inequality Review* which was a major piece of work undertaken on behalf of the 2020 Community Partnership - the city's LSP. A steering group of key stakeholders, together with 100 different people and groups, participated in the research.

The purpose of the review was to **evaluate the available evidence and understand where and amongst which communities inequality is experienced in the city** with the aim of considering what policy approaches and priorities would be needed to reduce it. The Review assessed the effectiveness of the city's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and other area based initiatives.

Trend data showed that the most deprived areas across the city were not 'closing the gap' on important indicators of equality.

Details of the research are available from the 2020 Community Partnership [website](#).

One of the conclusions of the Review was the **need to strike the right balance between people and place**, with clarity about what must be tackled **city-wide** in meeting the needs of communities of interest and **specific client groups**, and ensuring that equalities dimensions run through all aspects of neighbourhood renewal and service delivery.

From the Review, Brighton and Hove were able to bring together an **extensive evidence base** to enable a coherent and as up-to-date as possible understanding of the needs of the city and to see what impacts initiatives had had so far in tackling inequalities.

Developing the LAA

The overarching aim of Brighton and Hove's LAA is to reduce inequalities.

At the same time as the review was taking place, the 2020 Community Partnership was working with its partners to identify priorities from the National Indicator Set.

From the Review and supporting data from DWP, the Partnership could see that there were **specific geographic communities and user groups** affected by inequalities. For example, worklessness among Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani ethnic groups, and children with special educational needs, were even more concentrated in the city's most deprived areas. However, this was complicated by the fact that there were significant numbers of disadvantaged people also living outside these areas.

The Partnership held four and a half days worth of events between September and December to whittle down their priorities to 35 using the evidence base provided by the Equality Review.

"The theme groups were fundamentally engaged in these discussions and everybody was in agreement that the LAA was really about what we could achieve together." – 2020 Community Partnership Manager

Brighton and Hove has also agreed **26 local indicators** to enhance their work around equalities.

Community Engagement Framework

The 2020 Community Partnership approved the development of a **Community Engagement Framework** for the city in February 2008, following a detailed discussion of research findings into community engagement activity in the city in autumn 2007. The research highlighted a number of issues, including recognition that effective community engagement drives up the quality of services; a need to improve the co-ordination of community engagement initiatives; and to ensure that staff with a responsibility for delivering engagement support have access to appropriate levels of training and support.

The Framework will pull together agreed over-arching principles of engagement, underpinned by an **action plan** to improve the type and quality of different engagement activity in the city by statutory agencies as well as community and voluntary organisations.

The Framework will be **owned by the LSP and signed up to by all key sectors and agencies in the city**, including the Council, PCT and Police. The Council is supporting the development of the framework guided by a working group made up of representatives from the constituent organisations and partnerships of the LSP. This includes representatives from the community and voluntary sector. The intention is that the working group will disband once the framework is complete.

The development process for the Framework includes a **wide range of activities and approaches**, and is not solely reliant on the consultation document. For example, discussions have been held with a number of organisations, partnerships and groups that have focussed on their own experiences of engagement or of delivering engagement and their priorities for the future. This includes: attendance at a local BME voluntary umbrella group's citizenship picnic; attendance at a gathering of refugee community groups; attendance at the city's Community Safety Forum; a special session for council tenants supported by tenant participation officers; a community workers conference; facilitated discussions by community development workers with neighbourhood action groups; and a session with the Older Persons Council and one with youth consultants.

There have also been meetings with various LSP partnerships, for example the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and with individual statutory agencies, for example the PCT. A session for councillors was also held that had good cross-party attendance.

The development process has been informed and guided by the working group and has had a **degree of flexibility** to allow for different groups and organisations to be consulted in a way which best suits them.

There is a full consultation document which is primarily aimed at large organisations and partnerships. In response to recommendations from the working group, the project team also produced a shorter version aimed at smaller community groups. Consultation about the framework is, at this stage, aimed at partnerships, organisations and groups as opposed to individual citizens. When implementation of the framework begins the 2020 Partnership will seek to **involve citizens in the design and development of new engagement tools, techniques and structures**. This is when it will be most meaningful to individuals.

The Framework will be the **first time that a common policy on community engagement has been agreed in the city**, to which all key agencies and both the public and voluntary and community sector are signed up to.

The intention is to have the Framework completed and approved by the end of the calendar year in order to feed into budget setting this autumn. The consultation period is running from 16th June until 5th September in line with national Government guidance on consultation. The working group will also be holding an all-day drop in session on 8th September where public and voluntary sector organisations along with partnership members and councillors can see how the framework is shaping up based on the responses.

There are a number of key challenges to delivering an effective engagement framework including:

- lack of agreed terminology on and understanding about community engagement;
- a myriad of different philosophical and political views about what is good community engagement; and
- the cynicism of many elected members, officers and community and voluntary groups about the possibility of real change.

The key challenge for the framework is ensuring that the policy is backed by **real action and change**.

Equality Impact Assessments

Brighton and Hove City Council has its own toolkit for Equality Impact Assessments, which is currently under review. A **Rapid Impact Checklist (RIC)** is carried on new policies and services or on changes and reviews on existing services and policies. This helps to identify which policies require a full EqIA and which are in the second stage of the process. Using a RIC as part of the policy development process allows for any potential negative impacts to be mitigated through the development process.

Rapid Impact Assessment on Super LAA Refresh

This EqIA process was applied to Brighton and Hove’s LAA targets including its local targets. The LSP manager with officers from the Council’s policy team, equalities and inclusion team and performance team carried out the RIC using the template outlined below. This consisted of a **three hour meeting with each target lead assessing that the evidence base used – the Reducing Inequalities Review – was adequately reflected in the agreement, and identifying gaps that required further action**. The assessment undertaken involved reviewing the current proposed indicators and proposed local indicators based on the equalities groups list produced during the *Reducing Inequalities Review*. The assessment was arranged **by theme** rather than indicator.

Example Template

Equalities Group e.g. action	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Additional info & Evidence Required	Action
General				
Women				
BME				
White British				
Migrant workers				
Asylum Seeker/Refugee				
Gypsies/travellers				
Lone Parents				
Children & Young People				
Older People				

Equalities and the LSP

A new LSP partnership, the **City Inclusion Partnership (CIP)**, is being set up by the City Council. The Cabinet Member for Community Affairs and Social Inclusion is acting as interim chair of the partnership. It is currently scoping its remit and its first meeting is due in September. It is likely that **the CIP will monitor how statutory organisations are meeting their equality requirements**, with a particular focus on producing a **single equality scheme** for the city that covers all public agencies. It is also likely to **monitor and challenge the outcomes of the LAA**, ensuring LAA targets take into account and tackle inequality issues as identified in the city’s *Reducing Inequality Review*.

The CIP, like all other LSP partnerships, will be signing up to the Community Engagement Framework and using it as a tool to determine how it engages with different communities and residents in the city.