

**Committee:** Governance, Audit and Performance Committee

**Date:**

Thursday, 15  
November 2018

**Title:** Internal Audit of Equality & Diversity 2018/19

**Report Author:** Sheila Bronson, Audit Manager

sbronson@uttlesford.gov.uk

---

## Summary

1. The Internal Audit of Corporate Equality and Diversity 2018/19 was completed in October 2018 and the Final Report containing the agreed recommendations and management action plan has been circulated to members of this committee.

## Recommendations

2. That members review the information contained in Internal Audit of Corporate Equality and Diversity 2018/19 Final Report and refer any queries they may have to council officers present at the meeting.

## Financial Implications

3. Whilst there are no financial implications directly arising from the audit report, implementing the Management Action Plan will involve a significant amount of work. However, officers expect to be able to deliver the Management Action Plan within existing resources.

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
  - The Equality Framework For Local Government (EFLG) 2018 version

## Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The Council's Corporate and Senior Management have worked with Internal Audit throughout our audit work. The Final Report and its Recommendations have been discussed and agreed with the Council's Corporate Management Team
Community Safety	none

Equalities	The completion of the internal audit report and the development of the Management Action Plan represent significant steps towards the 'achieving' level of the Equality Framework For Local Government (EFLG)
Health and Safety	none
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Council has a legal obligation to take account of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of all its functions. The audit and implementation of the Management Action Plan will help to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that it is meeting its legal obligations in this regard.
Sustainability	none
Ward-specific impacts	none
Workforce/Workplace	Implementation of the Management Action Plan will help to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that it is meeting its legal obligations in employment with regard to equal treatment and the public sector equality duty.

## Situation

6. Internal Audit commenced work on the Audit of Corporate Equality and Diversity in April 2018; the Terms of Reference for the audit were agreed with the Chief Executive as Chief Auditee, and issued on 17 May 2018 and copied to members of this committee on 18 May 2018.
7. The Final Report for the audit was issued on 25 October 2018 and copied to members of this committee on 25 October 2018 and is reproduced as the appendix to this report.
8. In the Final Report, our overall opinion is that, based on the findings from our audit work, the Council is currently at the '**Developing**' authority level when measured against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
9. We have made nine recommendations aimed at improving governance, monitoring, reporting and compliance to equality legislation.
10. The EFLG has five performance areas:
  1. Knowing Your Community
  2. Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment
  3. Involving Your Communities
  4. Responsive Services and Customer Care

## 5. Skilled and Committed Workforce

11. The objective for this audit was to provide assurance on the Council's current level of achievement measured against the three levels in the EFLG:
  - Developing
  - Achieving
  - Excellent
12. The scope of the audit was to concentrate primarily on co-ordinating a self-assessment by corporate and senior managers of their services' current levels of achievement against the EFLG from which an evaluation of the responses could be made to provide an overall opinion on the Council's current position and make recommendations for management to consider and action.
13. At our auditing planning stage, eight main potential risk areas were identified on which we based our evaluation of the self-assessment responses:
  - a) Failure to implement and review the Single Public Sector Equality Duty;
  - b) Failure to measure the council against the EFLG;
  - c) Failure to produce Equality Impact Assessments where required;
  - d) Failure to ensure that there are sufficient staff resources to implement the EFLG;
  - e) Failure to train staff in Equality & Diversity;
  - f) Failure to embed sound Equality & Diversity principles throughout the authority which would make it difficult to then promote these ideals to the community;
  - g) Failure to provide accurate and up to date information provided on the Council's website;
  - h) Failure to consult with all groups to ensure compliance with the EFLG
14. A self-assessment questionnaire was prepared in line with the EFLG and a series of 1:1 meetings were held with the Senior Manager Team (SMT).
15. An Interim Report based on the SMT responses was drafted for discussion with the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and further meetings were held with CMT and their Senior Managers to consider the self-assessment responses.
16. A Draft Report with findings and recommendations were discussed in detail with CMT who have agreed the recommendations, Management responsibilities, actions and implementation dates.
17. The Final Report contains the overall Internal Audit Opinion, Recommendations and the agreed Management Action Plan.

## Risk Analysis

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Council fails to meet its obligation on Equality and Diversity	3 The Council has not undertaken the required level of internal actions to be able to assess its current compliance with equality legislation	3 The Council could face financial and reputation damage if it does not comply with equality legislation	The recommendations in the Internal Audit Report are implemented

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.