

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Committee</b>
3	Open	19.5.05	Cross Party Working Group – Ouseley Review Implementation
<b>Report Title</b>		Proposals regarding Strategic Reference Group	
<b>Ward (s) or groups affected</b>		All	
<b>From</b>		Chief Executive	

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Cross Party Working Group recommend that the Executive set up a Strategic Reference Group of key community stakeholders, with the terms of reference as set out in paragraph 3.5 and membership as set out in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9.
2. That this decision be in principle, pending discussion with the relevant stakeholders.
3. That subject to the agreement of the proposed SRG membership, the Cross Party Working Group agree that their first joint meeting with the SRG should be before the next Working Group on 27th June, and would focus on the proposed agenda items for that meeting,

## **BACKGROUND**

4. At its meeting on 4th April, the Cross Party Working Group recommendation was for reports to be presented to the next meeting in May as follows:

*Recommendation 2.2: Establishment of a Strategic Reference Group constituted of representatives of the community with knowledge and experience of working in the equality and diversity area, to assist the Working Party in developing its response to the recommendations*

5. This report sets out possible terms of reference and membership for the proposed SRG, taking account of the current engagement arrangements in operation across the full range of equality and diversity issues.

## **FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION**

6. The Council is seeking to strengthen its engagement with Southwark's diverse communities, and to provide effective mechanisms for dialogue and feedback. We recognise that we have some existing structures through which key community stakeholders provide advice, comment and challenge on the Council's equality and diversity policies and practice. These groups, which met together with the Council just after Lord Ouseley's report was published expressed a wish to work closely with the Council on the implementation of the report. In turn, reassurances were given that that involvement would be welcomed.

7. The existing structures are as follows:
- The Equality and Diversity Panel was established in 2003 and meets with senior officers for a half-day every six weeks. It has an intensive and planned programme of work that covers the development of Council policies, and that provides challenge and community input to the programme of Equality Impact Assessments. It represents the full range of equalities dimensions – age, disability, faith, gender, LGBT and race. The individuals undertake the work unpaid.
  - The BME Leaders Group was established in December 2004 through Southwark Alliance, and is scheduled to meet quarterly for an evening session. It provides a forum for dialogue with the Leader and Chief Executive, together with the PCT and Police about the policy and service delivery of the Council and other statutory bodies, and to share views about community relations within the borough.
8. In proposing to establish a Strategic Reference Group, there is clearly merit in building on the expressed commitment of our existing key stakeholders, and the current structures and membership. This would ensure continuity, provide an appropriate spread across the diversity dimensions, and avoid duplication and confusion from having a number of parallel structures. There could, on the other hand, be some advantage in having focus by seeking to create a smaller group from amongst this wider membership. However, this could have the disadvantage of reducing the range of equality dimensions and perspectives available to the Council, potentially impact on the Council's relationship with those not invited onto the smaller group, and place undue demands on a small number of busy individuals.
9. The proposal therefore is that the Council should discuss with the relevant stakeholders the option of reconfiguring both the existing Equality and Diversity Panel and the BME Leaders Group to form an overarching Equality and Diversity Strategic Reference Group. We would anticipate that the full membership would be able to comment on Working Group reports and come together on a bi-monthly basis to engage with the Cross Party Working Group. At the same time we would also propose that it would be useful and more practical on occasions to work with smaller sub-sets of the full membership around particular issues, such as Equality Impact Assessments, or implementation of particular themes within Lord Ouseley's recommendations.
10. We would propose that the role and remit of the Equality and Diversity Strategic Reference Group could be to:

- 1. Advise and comment on how the Council is implementing the recommendations of Lord Ouseley's report across the full range of diversity and equality dimensions. We would aim to do this by:**
- (a) testing out with members of the E & D Strategic Reference Group proposals prior to consideration by the Cross Party Working Group, and where timing allows, include those comments within the reports (commencing with the reports for the June WG meeting);**

- (b) holding bi-monthly joint meetings between the Working Group and the SRG to discuss key aspects of implementation, perhaps focusing on particular implementation themes at each meeting, with the first meeting prior to the June WG meeting
- (c) requesting that the SRG consider, feed in to and comment on the programme of work and outcomes of the work of the proposed Audit Team, (as set out in the separate report).
2. Advise on the development of new Council policies in respect of the equality dimensions and potential community impact, in the line with the current role of the EDP
  3. Provide comment and challenge on the programme and content of Equality Impact Assessments, including the adequacy of arrangements for user input to the EIAs, in line with the current role of the EDP.
  4. Provide a forum for sharing intelligence about community relations and cohesion, and for identifying shared approaches to improving community relations in the borough.

11. We would propose that the SRG work with this remit for the period up to April 2006 in the first instance. Once the recommendations of Lord Ouseley's report have substantially been implemented, it may be appropriate to review the SRG's role and operating arrangements.
12. The current membership of both the EDP and the BME Leaders Group comprise individuals with formal positions in key community organisations, including those with a remit across the dimensions of age, disability, faith, gender, LGBT and race. While some members have a particular remit and interest for one aspect of the equalities agenda, others bring together two or more dimensions.
13. As a consequence, it would be appropriate for the membership of the proposed Equality and Diversity Strategic Reference Group to comprise the combined knowledge and experience of the existing bodies, as follows:

Organisation	Named individual	Current BME/EDP
<b>Boyhood to Manhood</b>	Decima Francis, <i>Director</i>	EDP member
<b>Domestic Violence Forum</b>	Vacancy	EDP member
<b>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Network</b>	Linda Bellos, <i>Chair LGBT Network</i>	EDP member
<b>Organisation of Blind African-Caribbeans</b>	Ibuken Olashore, <i>Director,</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Alliance</b>	Michael Bukola, <i>SA resident</i> Dena Amer, <i>SA resident</i> Omar Faruk, <i>SA resident</i> Victoria Olisa, <i>SA resident</i>	BME Leaders BME Leaders BME Leaders BME Leaders
<b>Southwark Carers</b>	Vacancy	EDP member
<b>Southwark Children and Families Alliance</b>	Natalia Sali, <i>Co-ordinator,</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Community</b>	Angela Stanworth, <i>Director,</i>	EDP member

<b>Care Forum</b>	<i>SA member</i>	
<b>Southwark Disablement Association</b>	David Stock, <i>Director,</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Disabilities Forum</b>	Yvonne Poulson, <i>SDF member</i>	EDP member
<b>Strategic Ethnic Alliance</b>	Martin Seaton, <i>Chair</i> Paul Francis, <i>Co-ordinator,</i>	BME Leaders EDP Member
<b>Southwark Multi-faith Forum</b>	Rev. David Wade, <i>Chair MFF,</i> <i>Vice-Chair SA, Borough Dean,</i> Bola Okuboyejo, <i>Secretary MFF, SA member</i>	BME Leader & EDP member BME Leaders
<b>Southwark Pensioners Centre</b>	Ian Adams, <i>Director, SPC,</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Pensioners Forum</b>	Charles Cherrill, <i>Chair</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Police Consultative Committee</b>	Althea Smith, <i>Chair</i>	BME Leaders
<b>Southwark Race and Equality Council</b>	Sonia Murison, <i>Chair,</i> James Da Costa, <i>Executive,</i> <i>SA member,</i> Nikkoi Kotey, <i>Case Worker,</i>	BME Leaders BME Leaders EDP member
<b>Southwark Travellers Action Group</b>	Neil Southwick, <i>STAG Co-ordinator,</i>	EDP member
<b>Southwark Youth Council</b>	Vacancy	EDP member
<b>Speaking Out Group (learning disabilities)</b>	Vacancy	EDP member

14. This membership gives a breadth of perspectives across the equality and diversity agenda. In the context of Lord Ouseley's review there may be merit in adding the Chair of the Southwark Black Business Initiative, who is a member of the Southwark Alliance Enterprise Task Group.
15. In proposing that these particular organisations should constitute the Equality and Diversity Strategic Reference Group with a formal role at the hub of the Council's dialogue with communities on equality and diversity issues, the aim would be that this should add value to and strengthen other channels of dialogue and engagement. The Council will continue to engage with all the organisations individually as appropriate to their specific role and function, and with the individual wider networks that these organisations support. In addition, equality and diversity is not only an issue of concern for 'community of interest' organisations, but those that work across different communities in areas and neighbourhoods. As part of Lord Ouseley's recommendations, we will also be addressing ways to strengthen those avenues of engagement and dialogue.
16. If it is agreed in principle to establish the Equality and Diversity Strategic Reference Group along the lines proposed, some further dialogue will be needed with the Group to seek their views and to establish practicalities around ways of working. As part of this, we would need to address issues about supporting the Group, particularly around mechanisms outside the main bi-monthly meetings to provide formal feedback and responses to Working Party reports and other aspects of its remit.

17. At this stage therefore, it is suggested that the Working Group agree in principle to the proposals, subject to the views of the proposed SRG members. The Chief Executive will seek views from the proposed membership, and identify a provisional date for a first meeting before the next Working Group meeting on 27th June. Once the SRG proposals are finalised, these would need to be considered for formal agreement by the Executive.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

18. The Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and promote good relations between people of different communities. The proposals in this report would be a direct contribution to the Council meeting that duty by engaging with and having the advice of a range of key community stakeholders.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

19. At this stage, there are no significant resource implications. Officer time in kind will be required to organise and facilitate meetings of the SRG, which can be contained within existing budgets. There may be an issue of re-imburement of expenses for SRG members who have particular transport or childcare needs. These will be covered from within the resources set aside to implement Lord Ouseley's report.

## CONSULTATION

20. A copy of this report will be sent to the named organisations and individuals prior to the Working Group meeting, requesting any initial comments. It is proposed that any Working Group recommendation should be in principle, pending the opportunity to discuss this with the proposed SRG members.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Independent Review of the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework	Social Inclusion, Town Hall, Peckham Road, SE5 8UB	Nathalie Hadjifotiou 020 7525 7194

## APPENDIX A

### Audit Trail

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Chief Executive	
<b>Report Author</b>	Nathalie Hadjifotiou, Head of Social Inclusion	
<b>Version</b>	Draft	
<b>Dated</b>	11.5.05	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS /DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Borough Solicitor	Yes	Within general text
Chief Finance Officer	No	
Chief Officers	Yes	Within general text
Executive Member	Yes	

