

# **Welcoming City**

## **Report to Well-being Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **21<sup>st</sup> September 2016**

#### Introduction

This report provides the Committee with information about One Plymouth's<sup>1</sup> Welcoming City initiative, progress to date and plans for the future. Welcoming City celebrates diverse communities and aims to improve cohesion, equality, growth and well-being across all protected characteristics<sup>2</sup> and ultimately help to build strong and inclusive communities.

#### Background

In March 2016, One Plymouth adopted terms of reference for Welcoming City, and agreed that Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer would lead this.

Superintendent Dave Thorne is coordinating the work, supported by Chief Inspector Matt Longman, who is seconded to the initiative for a period to be decided in the next planning phase both are supported by Pete Aley, Head of Neighbourhood & Community Services for the council.

One Plymouth was mindful of a wide variety of good work undertaken in the last few years to build strong and inclusive communities and is keen to develop (not disregard) this and enhance leadership in this area. This reflects the Fairness Commission's recommendation (42): "That organisations from all sectors in the city generate leadership on tackling discrimination in all its forms, against specific actions". Welcoming City will help take this forward. It also supports implementation of the Plymouth Plan (Policy 41, Welcoming everyone: celebrating diverse communities) which says:-

"With more people making their home here, we want Plymouth to grow as a welcoming, multicultural city. As the city grows and attracts new international businesses, visitors and students, Plymouth will need to strengthen its reputation as a welcoming, multicultural city where a broad range of partners promote the benefits of diversity and challenge unfair discrimination. Plymouth will be a fair city where people take pride in their communities, are listened to

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<sup>1</sup> One Plymouth brings together leaders with influence in Plymouth to help promote improvements; it is not a constituted board.

<sup>2</sup> Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation.

and can make a real contribution to Plymouth as a place to live, work and visit.”

## Objectives

One Plymouth is bringing organisations together to work towards the following objectives:

### **1. Promote and celebrate diversity**

Collectively promote Plymouth as a Welcoming City and celebrate the contribution of diverse communities to our economy and culture.

### **2. Bringing society together**

Playing our part in bringing Britain together as one nation, promoting British values as part of a successful, integrated, multi-race, multi-faith country; especially through education.

### **3. Take a common approach**

Take a common approach to providing support for diverse communities, including dealing with hate incidents and commissioning services, to promote good levels of community cohesion

### **4. Share knowledge and information**

Share knowledge and information about the nature and needs of Plymouth's different communities and ensure that services respond to our increasingly diverse service users.

### **5. Empower communities**

Empower communities to embed a welcoming approach so people from different backgrounds get on well together and everyone does their bit.

### **6. Improved tackling and challenging of hate and discrimination**

Develop a joint understanding of how we will stand firm as a united voice against hate, and challenge unfair discrimination.

### **7. Deliver actions**

Develop and deliver joint actions with clear responsibilities, to underpin our commitments.

### **8. Support and challenge**

Support and challenge each other through a “peer review” approach to assess and improve equality practice across our organisations’ service and employment practices.

## What does success look like?

It is not easy to define success in such a complex and subjective area, and One Plymouth is mindful that views on this will be as diverse as our communities. A welcoming city relies on a complex set of interdependencies across the system to produce the right conditions. Local, regional, national and international factors can influence this and well-being, equalities, community safety, the economy,

and capacity within communities all play their part. What "it feels like" far outweighs any quantitative measure.

However One Plymouth believes our ultimate and over-arching outcome should be whether:-

- people from different backgrounds say they get on well together.

Other outcomes underpinning this should include:-

- a feeling that the city is welcoming and dealing effectively with discrimination;
- equality of access and opportunities in services;
- staff feeling they are free from harassment with equality of opportunity; and
- people feeling safe and secure.

Measuring this is difficult, and further work will be undertaken on measures we might use – this is likely to be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, with progress measured against each objective. The way in which we do this, needs to take account of stakeholder engagement.

### Progress and future work

An initial action plan is underway, capturing a variety of work under the Welcoming City umbrella including:-

- hate crime: improving reporting, member training and promoting hate crime awareness week;
- self-assessment and peer review between organisations – see below;
- small grants scheme for diverse communities;
- "meet & greets" between portfolio holder and diverse communities
- community engagement – see below;
- diverse community events calendar;
- community cohesion events in areas with lowest cohesion "scores";
- supporting Ramadan arrangements;
- faith & belief charter;
- stall at pride festival;
- making connections with other cities who are delivering similar pieces of work post Fairness Commission; and
- a working group is being established to drive deliverables across the city. It's membership involves key individuals who will undertake specific tasks such as peer review, stakeholder management and Fairness Commission recommendation reviews.

A Steering group has been established to drive delivery, with the following membership either already committed or where commitment is still sought:-

- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Plymouth City Council
- Plymouth University
- Education rep.

Delivery against the action plan has already commenced with smaller task and finish groups used to lead on themes and discrete pieces of work, as required, and the first of these is underway dealing with the peer review.

The peer review will be a self-assessment undertaken by One Plymouth organisations, using a common set of criteria to assess strengths and weakness with regard to equality and diversity practice eg knowledge of communities, customer monitoring and satisfaction across protected characteristics, workforce profiles, equal pay, reporting and responding to hate incidents. Assessments will be undertaken during September / October and results will allow One Plymouth leaders to support and challenge each other over improvements and help inform the future approach of Welcoming City.

Over the last couple of months, Matt Longman has undertaken informal engagement with a number of stakeholders from across diverse communities. Feedback has helped plan future work. A more structured programme of engagement will seek views on how we should deliver Welcoming City's objectives including what is already going on, how we should priorities, and identifying enablers and inhibitors. Using a set of core questions this will encourage a range of professionals to use existing opportunities, networks, groups and meetings etc, to engage with diverse communities during September and October. This will also be an opportunity to encourage wider community ownership of this agenda. Information about views and attitudes which may hamper Welcoming city's objectives will also be sought.

Informed by the feedback, a set of options for implementation will be drawn up. At this stage any quick wins identified will be presented to the steering group for consideration of early implementation.

A second phase of engagement will then take place during November / December using eg workshops, including community & voluntary sector organisations, professionals working in the field of diversity, and diverse

communities. At this stage an opportunity will also be created for senior leaders to meet face to face with different communities to hear views on the options under consideration.

During January and February 2017 the action plan will be refreshed, based on feedback received from consultation and the outcomes of the peer reviews. Measures will also be identified at this stage. Implementation will begin in March.

### Conclusion

Since its' inception earlier this year, city leaders have allocated resources to developing our Welcoming City initiative and early milestones have been realised. We are now embarking on key areas of engagement and peer review which will be vital to shaping options and setting the foundations for implementation early next year. The ultimate goal is to embed a welcoming city approach into everything we do and move this from initiative to business as usual.

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