

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Richard Barnes

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Jennette Arnold AM

Member for North East London
Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest
Chair of Budget Management and Administration Committee

Date: 7 December 2010

Dear Jennette

Thank you for your letter dated 23 September 2010 in which you respond on behalf of the Budget Management and Administration Committee (BMAC) to the consultation on the draft GLA Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes. I would like to thank you for your detailed response and take this opportunity to respond to the substantive points raised on behalf of the Committee in your letter.

As you are aware it is the government's intention that the new General Equality Duty arising from the Equality Act 2010 comes into effect from 2011. The government has also stated its intention that public authorities must publish new equality objectives to further the new General Duty no later than 2012. In light of this development the GLA has taken a decision not to produce individual equality schemes for each equality strand, but to combine our actions and commitment for change into one more focused document. Feedback from other respondents supports our approach to reduce repetition across all three schemes.

I would like to reassure you the intelligence gathered as part of the consultation process for all three draft equality schemes has not been in vain. I intend to use this valuable information to inform the GLA's equality and diversity objectives going forward under the Equality Act. All submissions are currently being individually analysed and a consultation report will be published online in January 2011.

To move forward the Mayor's commitment to delivering equal life chances for Londoners, officers in the Diversity and Social Policy Team are currently developing an Equal Life Chances Delivery Plan. This Delivery Plan will pull together all the commitments made in the Mayor's equality framework, 'Equal Life Chances for All', and those contained in the draft Race, Gender and Disability Schemes, with clear accountabilities and partner involvement identified.

In preparation for implementation of our legal obligations under the Equality Act, the Diversity and Social Policy Team is also currently completing an evidence gathering equality impact assessment exercise to assess the potential and actual impact of Mayoral policy on age, faith and sexual orientation equality strands. This process also includes an element of external stakeholder consultation to ensure that the all areas where it is identified that the Mayor could influence change are considered.

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When developing the GLA's equality objectives as required under the Equality Act 2010, the Diversity and Social Policy Team will take into account the outcome of the consultation on the Race, Gender, and Disability Equality Schemes, the outcomes of the impact assessment exercise for age, faith and sexual orientation, and external community intelligence.

It is my intention that a fully revised version of the Mayor's equality framework, Equal Life Chances for All, will be launched in 2011, which will encompass all of these detailed commitments to equality and diversity.

Both the Mayor and I are aware that given the diversity of London's population, the importance of the role played by the voluntary and community sector (VCS), which complements public service provision in London. The GLA will continue to work closely with our VCS partners, both to inform our strategic direction, to promote community cohesion and social integration, and to promote our policy agenda to all London communities, including those that are harder to reach.

I look forward to exploring the additional points raised in your letter relating to GLA's 2010 Annual Equalities Report and 'Equal Life Chances for All' with the Committee at the forthcoming meeting on Thursday 16 December.

Yours sincerely



Richard Barnes

Deputy Mayor of London