



EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
24 February 2022
CABINET: 8 March 2022

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Y Gagen

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SUBJECT: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and the Equality Objectives for the period 2022 to 2026.

2.0a RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1a That the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy for the Council and the Equality Objectives 2022-2026 be considered and agreed comments before forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

2.0b RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1b That, having regard to the agreed comments of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet approve the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy for the Council and the Equality Objectives 2022-2026.

2.2b That the Equality Objectives form part of the relevant Head of Service, Service Action Plan targets.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 As a Public Sector organisation the Council has a public sector equality duty (PSED) in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This

means the Council must, in the exercise of all our functions, have **due regard** to these three aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 explains that the second aim (advancing equality of opportunity) involves, in particular:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 To assist the Council in fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) it is required to have Equality Objectives as a public sector organisation. The last set of equality objectives in place for the Council were developed to complement the key priorities adopted by the Council in the Council Plan 2015-2018.

4.2 Equality Objectives should be refreshed at least every four years. A refreshed set of equality objectives, which align to the current Council's vision and priorities, has been developed and incorporated into an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy which summarises the Council's legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the protected characteristics of **sex, gender reassignment, disability, race, age, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation**.

4.3 Consequently a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy has been developed which incorporates a set of revised Equality Objectives and is attached at Appendix 1. These refreshed objectives align with some of the key priorities for the Council and establish key actions to be taken to achieve those objectives. The Heads of Service responsible for each particular objective have been identified as the lead officer in each case.

4.4 The Strategy document and Objectives have been brought together following consultation with each service within the Council, who have put forward representatives to an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.

4.5 It is proposed that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Objectives are approved for adoption by the Council. Once adopted, the Equality Objectives will then form part of the Service Action Plans for the relevant Head of Service to be monitored and delivered.

- 4.6 More detailed action plans for achieving the objectives will be developed locally to demonstrate how the objectives are being met.
- 4.7 Progress against the objectives will be reported to CMT and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The information set out in this report aims to help the Council improve its commitment to fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes will be made in the relevant risk registers.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The proposal will provide measurable equality objectives for the Council to work towards achieving. It is anticipated that the successful achievement of these objectives will *maximise positive and minimise negative impacts in the following areas:*

- Promote good health and wellbeing and enable people to flourish
- Empower people in vulnerable, deprived and disadvantaged communities to realise their full health potential
- Encourage and enable all people to take a role in identifying and addressing barriers to improve health and wellbeing
- Increase people's independence throughout their life course and ability to lead full active lives

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Exempt Information (*To be included only on those reports covered by Schedule 12A i.e. Exempt Information*)

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Appendices

1. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Equality Objectives 2022-2026 and appendices
2. Equality Impact Assessment