



CABINET: 9 JANUARY 2018

Report of: Borough Treasurer

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Yvonne Gagen

Contact for further information: Ms S Lewis (Ext 5027)
(E-mail: Sharon.Lewis@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.0 To provide an update on Equality and Diversity matters and to seek approval for a number of changes to equality policies and objectives.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the revised Equality Statement and Equality in Employment Statement, at Appendix A and B respectively, be agreed.

2.2 That the revised Equality Objectives 2015-2018 document at Appendix C be agreed.

2.3 That progress against the Equality Objectives, that they now form part of the relevant Service Action Plans, and that the actions are recorded and monitored as part of core business, be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 A report entitled "Revised Equality Objectives 2015/18" was considered by Cabinet in January 2016. This report updated the Council's Equality Objectives to reflect changes in the Council Plan 2015-18. It also provided a summary of progress against the Council's Equality Action Plan, confirming that all the actions on the plan were concluded, with the exception of some residual equality training.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION AND UPDATE

4.1 The Equality Action Plan has now been fully delivered and all actions have been completed. Following a period of consolidation since the completion of the Equalities Action Plan, the Equality and Diversity Strategic Steering Group (EDSSG) have met to consider refreshing the work of the group and review the Equality agenda. Following discussions and consideration of the previous equality action plan activities that remained ongoing, the EDSSG identified the following actions:

- Review the ELearning modules of Emerge on Equality Training for both Staff and Members and to make suggested improvements
- Consider whether Equality Objectives should be linked to Service Action Plans and Covalent monitoring
- Ask local service areas whether any new questionnaires or surveys have been produced over the last 18 months that add to information on monitoring in relation to protected characteristics
- Share information on Language Line across the Council
- Review and confirm clear Terms of Reference for the Group
- Review the action plan and consider areas to be incorporated into a new action plan for 2017/18
- Consider updating the Council's Equality Objectives (subject to Cabinet approval)
- Review the equality statistics
- Review equality and diversity information on the Web site with a view to identifying improvements and / or updates
- Updating the Equality Statement and Equality in Employment Statement of the Council to acknowledge the UK Government adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism

4.2 By way of an update against the existing Equality Objectives, the recent action against each is detailed below:

Equality Objective: **Ambitious for Our Economy** – retain and grow jobs, increase skills levels and encourage business and wealth.

The Council continues to support tenants and residents of West Lancashire to access skills, learning and employment opportunities. The three service areas of Economic Regeneration, Leisure and Cultural Services and Housing and Inclusion worked closely with Lancashire Sport to develop a More Positive Together Scheme which will see support specifically directed towards our housing tenants.

The Skills, Training and Employment Partnership, facilitated by the Economic Regeneration team, continues to be well attended by a range of partners,

including the Lancashire LEP Skills and Employment Hub. This ensures all the relevant parties are involved in discussions, sharing knowledge and information relating to skills, learning and employment opportunities.

Officers are also fully engaged with Growth Lancashire, who are responsible for delivering the Lancashire Boost Gateway, to ensure all our businesses have access to professional advice for development and growth support.

Greenshoots has now been developed and renamed the Greenwood Business Park to reflect that it is open for business. All of the 11 high-spec units are now fully let.

Working with a Skelmersdale based third sector organisation, the Council continues to support businesses to take on apprentices. Between October 2015 and March 2017, 38 businesses had employed an apprentice as a direct result of Council intervention.

Equality Objective: **Ambitious for our Environment** – enhancing the built and physical environment, and cleanliness and tidy and combat crime and the fear of crime.

The Council continues to engage in the ASBRAC programme which looks specifically at high risk victims. We also discuss repeat and vulnerable callers each month at the Local Priorities Group.

The Council does visits to the crisis centre, the youth zone and the refuge to engage with potential new tenants regarding their actions and because they have some potential to be vulnerable in new tenancies.

In addition we have tried to identify if there was any "under reporting", and have had some success in engaging people to discuss any potential gaps.

There is also the community trigger which people can use if they feel that agencies haven't taken their complaint seriously.

Equality Objective: **Ambitious for Our Health and Wellbeing** - improving the health and wellbeing of local communities

The Financial Inclusion Officer has developed a referral system for money advice to ensure that debt and advice is targeted to need. Officers review the financial circumstances of all new tenants to prioritise financial support and wellbeing for tenants.

Drop-ins for advice have been operating in the youth zone, and family centres.

- 4.3 During the year work has been undertaken in relation to the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirement due to be published in April 2018 and an Equal Pay Audit. Both of the reports will be made available for members in due course

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Members are now asked to note that the Equality Objectives form part of the relevant Service Action Plans to ensure actions are recorded and monitored as part of core business.
- 5.2 It is recommended that revisions are made to the Equality Statement and Equality in Employment Statement as detailed in Appendix A and B noting the incorporation of specific wording to reflect the UK Government adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism.
- 5.3 It is also proposed to make a number of revisions to the Equality Objectives 2015-2018 document as detailed in Appendix C. These revisions have been made to refresh the objectives and ensure they remain in line with current Council priorities.
- 5.4 A final review of the activities detailed in the 2015-18 Equality Objectives will take place during early 2018. Following this the Equality Objectives will be realigned to meet the priorities of the Council Plan 2018-21, and presented to members for approval around summer 2018.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Council has a legal duty to carry out the functions of the Equality Act 2010, in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore failure to do so is a breach under this Act. Accordingly there is significant involvement from and impact upon statutory bodies, the public and other interested parties associated with this legislation and its administration. Its implementation links closely with the Council Plan, as the equality objectives relate directly to the core functions of the Council.

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

Appendices

- Appendix A Equality Statement
- Appendix B Equality in Employment Statement
- Appendix C Equality Objectives 2015/18
- Appendix D Equality Impact Assessment