



CABINET – 14 SEPTEMBER 2018

**EQUALITY STRATEGY 2016-20 AND EQUALITY ACTION PLAN
2018-19**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of progress with delivery of the aims and objectives in the Council's Equality Strategy 2016-20, which are the subject of annual Action Plans.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that;
 - (a) The progress made in 2017/18 with regard to the aims in the Council's Equality Strategy be welcomed;
 - (b) The Equality Action Plan for 2018/19 be supported.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. To support and encourage work being done across the Authority to develop a diverse workforce and inclusive and responsive services and promote good relations across the local community.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The Chief Executive, following consultation with the Cabinet lead member, is authorised to update and approve the annual Equality Action Plans in line with the Equality Strategy 2016-20.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. The Equality Act received royal assent on 6th April 2010 but many of its provisions were brought into effect through the Public Sector Equality Duty in April 2011. The Act outlines three core duties which require public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- i. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - ii. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - iii. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6 The Council is required to produce an Equality Strategy to demonstrate how it is meeting its statutory duties regarding equality and diversity. This is to ensure that the work it does can be prioritised and people with different protected characteristics can be best helped in the most cost effective way.
- 7 Equality Action Plans are produced to show how the aims and objectives set out in the Equality Strategy are being delivered and therefore contribute to the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and its commitment to equality in the Strategic Plan 2018-22.

The Equality Strategy 2016-2020 was approved by the County Council in June 2016.

Resource Implications

- 8 The Equality Strategy and Action Plans are serviced through a dedicated Policy Officer (Equalities) within Chief Executive's Department and supported and delivered by staff throughout the County Council. There are no other resource implications.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 9 None.

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PART B

Background

10. The Council's Equality Strategy covers the period 2016-2020. Derived from this is the Council's Equality Action Plan which supports the aims and objectives set out in the Strategy.

Progress against 2017-18 targets

11. The 2017-18 Equality Action Plan sought to clarify the relationship between the actions and the Council's statutory duties under equality legislation while adopting a more rigorous approach to how plan outcomes are achieved and progress measured. In terms of specific actions or groups of actions, this included: improving rates of self-declaration; considering the grounds for reviewing the Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) toolkit; and a focus on prioritising disability issues. Principal achievements include:
- The improved reporting of workforce representation data and equality and diversity training take-up through Tableau software dashboards that provide a visual snapshot of trends and areas for further analysis and action.
 - The development of a paper-based equality monitoring form that can be used across all departments in conjunction with campaigns to increase self-declaration rates.
 - Collating and publishing gender pay gap information in line with government deadlines.
 - Maintaining a Top 100 rating as the second-highest county council and fifth-highest local government organisation in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2018 with an overall placing of 79th out of over 430 participating organisations.
 - Completing a successful disabled graduate internship under the Leonard Cheshire Disability 'Change100' programme.
 - The introduction of a new and well-received face-to-face EHRIA training.
 - Two cohorts of British Sign Language (BSL) taster courses introduced for staff with contact with Deaf service users and / or colleagues.
 - The delivery of commemorative and public events including Member representation where appropriate for Holocaust Memorial Day 2017, Srebrenica Memorial Week 2017, Raising the Rainbow Flag event and the Leicestershire Inter Faith Forum Conference 2017.

Key Themes of the Equality Action Plan 2018-19

12. The new Equality Action Plan for 2018-19 continues an outcome-based approach as well as aiming to respond to risks and issues that have emerged in relation to the Staff Survey 2017 results. The Plan promotes clearer accountability between day-to-day equalities compliance at operational level and the strategic overview provided through the Equalities Board, and improved quality assurance of EHRIAs especially in cases of potential cumulative impacts. Principal actions to be included within the 2018-19 Plan are listed below:
- An increased focus on disability in order for the Council to respond strongly and coherently to the issues raised by disabled employees in the Staff Survey 2017. The starting point for this work will be a follow-up survey to probe further into the issues raised.
 - Strengthened accountability and transparency for delivering on each action by differentiating between lead and supporting functions. By identifying that many actions require a collaborative solution across both corporate and operational level departments, the Council's approach will ensure that actions include relevant linkages to major projects like Fit for the Future and the People Strategy.
 - Improving how the Council demonstrates a high-level commitment to equalities issues whilst also ensuring that departments are adequately equipped – through appropriate training, equality monitoring, EHRIA guidance and other supporting processes – to take ownership of equalities compliance.
 - A Task and Finish approach to undertake a major review of the EHRIA toolkit.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

13. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment is carried out for consideration and approval by the County Council of the full Equality Strategy over each relevant period.

Appendix

Equality Action Plan for 2018-19.

Background Papers

Report to the County Council – 29 June 2016 – Equality Strategy 2016 – 2020

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4552&Ver=4>