

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Full Council

Date: 3rd December 2018

REPORT TITLE: Review of Single Equality Scheme

PORTFOLIO: Leader of the Council

HEAD OF SERVICE: Andy O'Brien

CONTACT OFFICER: Stiliyana Stoyanova Ext. No. x1791

WARD(S) AFFECTED: N/A

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. A review of the Single Equality Scheme and the Council's corporate equality objectives has been undertaken. The Scheme is a way for the Council to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the purpose of this report is to highlight and propose the necessary changes to the document.

2. Background

- 2.1. The current Single Equality Scheme was last reviewed in 2015 when the equality objectives were updated and presented in a new format. It is now time to review it again as part of the 2018-2019 Corporate and Service Plans.
- 2.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED, created by the Equality Act 2010) requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to
- 2.2.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - 2.2.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 2.2.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 2.3. These three key aims are expected to be considered by the Council in relation to all of its functions and practices and to be reflected in the further improved design of policies and delivery of services. This consistent approach to equality enhances both the effectiveness of the services, which aim to meet the diverse needs of all customers, and the supportive and inclusive working environment cultivated for and by all members of staff.
- 2.4. The general equality duty (or PSED) is supported by specific duties which help public bodies to meet the above requirements. One such step was for the Council to prepare and publish one or more equality objectives by 6th April 2012 and to do so at least every four years thereafter.
- 2.5. There is no requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to have an equality scheme. However, the Single Equality Scheme is the Council's way to publish the necessary information in one document and demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty.
- 2.6. Additionally, the Council is also required to collect and publish equality information on its service users and workforce. This includes information relating to people who share protected characteristics and who are affected by the Council's policies and practices. This information is annually published on the Council's website.

3. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

- 3.1. The Single Equality Scheme is listed as an objective in the 2018-2019 Corporate and Service Plans and it contributes towards promoting equality, inclusion and wellbeing.

4. Revision of the Single Equality Scheme

- 4.1. The Scheme recognises our legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010, and states our response to the requirements of the public sector equality duty. The Scheme includes the same equality objectives which are the key objectives that the Council will undertake in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty:

Objective 1: Everyone can access our services, facilities and information

Objective 2: Decision making and services are influenced by the needs of residents and communities

Objective 3: Discrimination, harassment and hate crime is not tolerated

Objective 4: Our workforce, and workforce policies, support equality

The objectives are proposed to remain the same as they have proven to be robust and reflective of the purpose of the Council's services and activities to contribute to the creation of a fairer Borough.

Each objective has associated actions and includes details on how the objectives will be measured. The actions and measurements under each objective have been reviewed and refreshed.

The following amendments have been made to the Scheme (Appendix 1):

- 4.2. Updated names, dates, job titles as well as changed formatting sections to create a fresher outlook.
- 4.3. Minor linguistic changes in some paragraphs to strengthen meaning.
- 4.4. Updated information under each objective – EHIA's; services, activities and consultation practices from different areas (Leisure Centres, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Sports Development, Community and Open Spaces, Enterprise).
 - 4.4.1. Information added about equality data collected (or to be collected) from various service areas – Leisure Centres, Sports Development, Customer Service Centres, Brewhouse Arts Centre, anti-social behaviour complaints as well as job applicants.
 - 4.4.2. Information on accreditations and statuses was updated (e.g. Inclusive Fitness Initiative; Disability Confident Employer; Mindful Employer).
 - 4.4.3. Details about Health Promotion and Sports Development initiatives were discussed and updated accordingly.
 - 4.4.4. Information about assisted bin collections and gardening opportunities was included.
 - 4.4.5. Specifics, where relevant, about consultation practices held by various teams were added (Health and Sports Development, Enterprise, Community and Open Spaces).
 - 4.4.6. Outdated information about hate crime partnerships was removed and a brief line about the Prevent Partnership Board was added (where applicable).
 - 4.4.7. Information was updated in relation to equality training and its diverse aspects. A detail about the role of the Workplace Health group was also introduced.
 - 4.4.8. General information on training opportunities available to all members of staff, the Council's responsibility to report on its gender pay gap and equalities being a key item on the CMT's agenda was added.
- 4.5. Information on equality objectives was updated to be monitored by Heads of Service and managers and supported by the Equality and Health Working group.

- 4.6. Section 3 outlining the progress against the equality objectives 2012-2015 was removed as it was no longer necessary. The objectives from 2012-2015 were different to the objectives agreed for 2015-2018 and a summary report was useful to provide a holistic view on the Council's equality progress then (during the review of the Scheme in 2015). The objectives for 2018 remain the same as the 2015 ones and any further progress against them will be outlined in the annual progress reports used for performance monitoring and published on the Council's website.
- 4.7. A brief statement was added to highlight that the responsibility for equality sits with everybody within the Council.
- 4.8. An additional appendix was included, listing the various types of discrimination (mirroring the Equality in Employment Policy Statement).

5. **Financial Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: **Lisa Turner***

- 5.1. There are no financial issues arising from this Report.

Revenue	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21

Capital	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21

6. **Risk Assessment and Management**

- 6.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:
- 6.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):
 - 6.2.1. The updated Single Equality Scheme outlines in one place the steps the Council is taking to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It demonstrates the Council's continuous commitment to advance equality and inclusion.
- 6.3. **Negative** (Threats):
 - 6.3.1. Failure to implement the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every 4 years, which the Council thinks it has to work towards in order to meet the general equality duty, could result in complaints or an increased risk of legal proceedings against the

Council.

6.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register.

7. **Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:
Angela Wakefield*

7.1. There are no legal issues arising from this Report.

8. **Equalities and Health**

8.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is required and is attached as Appendix 2.

8.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question is required and is attached as Appendix 2.

8.3. The main equality and health issues / impact identified from this Report are as follows:

8.3.1. The nature of a number of the corporate equality objectives relate to health and sports activities which can have an impact on people's ability to improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing and their willingness to continuously access the services to prolong the positive impact.

8.3.2. National and local data related to some protected characteristics remains limited.

9. **Human Rights**

9.1. The main Human Rights issues arising from this Report are as follows:

Article 10 – Freedom of expression

Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination

10. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

10.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures): **N/A**

10.2. Please detail any positive/negative aspects:

10.2.1. Positive (Opportunities/Benefits)

10.2.2. Negative (threats)

11. **Recommendation(s)**

11.1. To approve the recommended updates to the Single Equality Scheme.

12. **Background Papers**

12.1. None

13. **Appendices**

13.1. Appendix 1: Single Equality Scheme 2018 – tracked changes

13.2. Appendix 2: EHIA of Single Equality Scheme 2018