

# Executive

Agenda  
Item:  
  
A.7

Meeting Date: 27 May 2020  
 Portfolio: Communities, Health and Wellbeing  
 Key Decision: No  
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes  
 Public / Private: Public

Title: Review of Equality Policy and objectives  
 Report of: Policy and Communications Manager  
 Report Number: P&C 10/20

**Purpose / Summary:**

This report presents the Equality Policy and objectives 2020-24.

**Recommendations:**

The Executive is asked to:

1. Approve the Equality Policy and objectives (Appendix 1).

**Tracking**

Executive:	10 February 2020
Scrutiny:	9 January 2020
Council:	

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council's Equality Policy outlines how we meet the duties of the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The previous Policy was approved by the Executive in March 2016, including the equality objectives for 2016-19.
- 1.2 The Health and Wellbeing Panel considered the Annual Equality Report 2018/19 at their meeting on 11 July 2019. The Panel noted that the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to set equality objectives at least every four years and resolved to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review. The task group presented their review work, including the revised draft policy and objectives, to the Health and Wellbeing Panel on 9 January 2020, prior to referring them to the Executive.
- 1.3 The Executive considered the draft Equality Policy and objectives on 10 February 2020. They agreed to undertake consultation on the draft policy prior to adoption.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 The revised Equality Policy includes the equality objectives 2020-24 (Appendix 1). They ensure that the Council continues to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and promotes equality of opportunity in all of its functions. The equality objectives have been developed to reflect the Council's achievements so far and continue to strengthen this work.
- 2.2 The existing equality action plan on how the Council will work towards achieving the objectives will be updated. Progress will be reported to the Senior Management Team, the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny through the Annual Equality Report.

## **3. RISKS**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty places specific duties on the Council, the Equality Policy and equality objectives provide evidence of compliance with these duties.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Consultation on the draft policy and objectives was undertaken with partners, public, staff and members. Feedback from this has been incorporated into the final version of the document.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 This report presents the revised Equality Policy and objectives, to enable the Council to continue to fulfil the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES**

6.1 The equality objectives support the Carlisle Plan's priorities by promoting equality of opportunity for all and seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Carlisle.

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**Appendices Appendix 1 – Equality Policy and Equality Objectives 2020-24 attached to report:**

**Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:**

- O&S 01/20 Task and Finish Group report - Review of equality objectives – Executive 10 February 2020

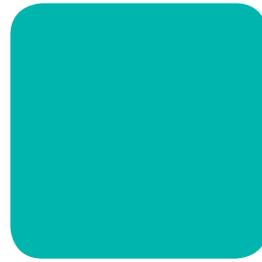
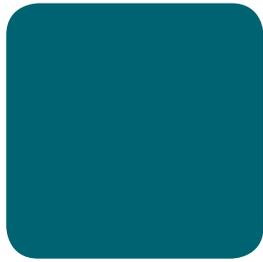
### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL** - The Equality Act 2010 replaced the previous discrimination legislation in Great Britain and affects the Council in a number of ways, particularly in respect of our role as an employer and a service provider. The Equality Policy and equality objectives demonstrate how the Council will continue to seek to comply with its obligations in the future.

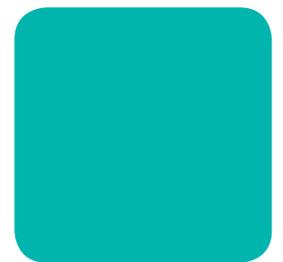
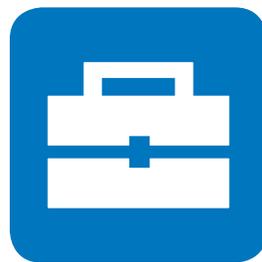
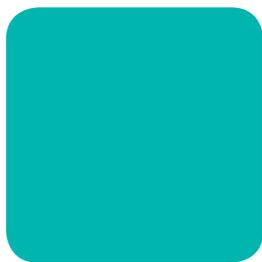
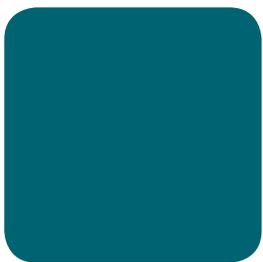
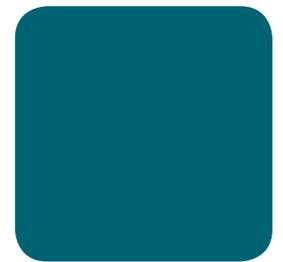
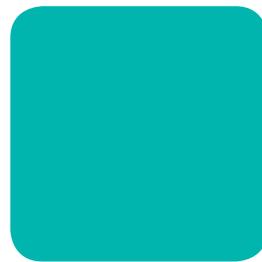
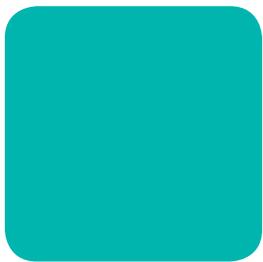
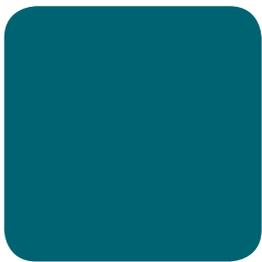
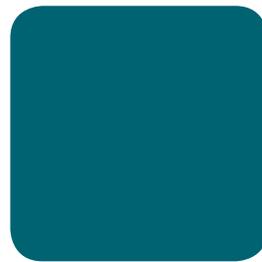
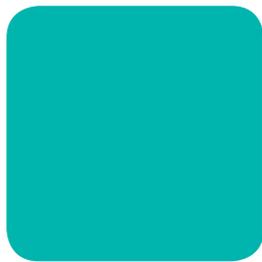
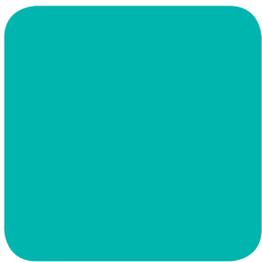
**FINANCE** – None

**EQUALITY** – The Equality Policy and equality objectives enable the Council to meet its requirements under the Equality Act (2010).

**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE** – The Council must adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 in how it collects and uses equality data, ensuring that individuals are made aware of this, and that any disclosure of equality data as part of reports and/ or statistics has gone through appropriate governance checks.



# Equality Policy 2020



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# Why we need an Equality Policy

Under the Equalities Act (2010), Carlisle City Council must adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and have due regard to the need to:

- 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.

The PSED covers the relevant protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

We must also:

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the equality duty, at least annually.
- Set equality objectives, at least every four years.

We must publish information about the protected characteristics of our employees and people affected by our policies and practices. We should also provide information about how equality is considered in decision making, policy development, consultation and procurement.

This policy sets out how we will adhere to our duties and requirements of the Equality Act. Our aim is to improve the information we collect to help us identify areas for development. We will continue to embed equality in our services and show we are committed to promoting diversity. We welcome our responsibilities as an employer, as a provider of services and as a community leader, and value the legislation that supports our commitment to equality and fairness.

# Our responsibilities

Our Equality Policy applies to:

- Service users
- Councillors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors, sub-contractors and partners

The Executive makes decisions in line with Carlisle City Council's policy and budgetary framework. These decisions must always be informed with an assessment of equality impacts.

The Chief Executive is responsible for making sure our equality policy is applied consistently throughout the organisation.

Senior management are responsible for making sure that departmental procedures and service plans reflect the equality policy and deliver the required outcomes.

We expect all staff and councillors to show commitment to ensuring that this policy is implemented, and to abide by the Code of Conduct and our Dignity and Respect policy in the performance of their duties.

Similarly, our employees, councillors and any other people providing services to the public are entitled to be treated fairly and with respect. Where they face discrimination or harassment from service users, we will take action to stop this happening again. In some circumstances this may include the withdrawal or refusal of the service.

# Equality Statement

The Equality Statement sets out our commitment to promote equality of opportunity in all our services:

**Carlisle is home to a wide range of people who make different and valuable contributions to life in the area. We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect, and are committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. Our commitment applies whether the Council is acting as an employer, providing services, or commissioning services from other organisations.**

**Working closely with all its statutory partners, including social enterprise, business and voluntary sectors, we are committed to achieving the highest possible standard of service delivery and employment practice. We also seek to build closer links with all communities across the district to promote equality.**

**All employees and councillors have responsibility for equality and ensuring that we meet our duties.**

# How we will deliver equality in our services

## Consultation and engagement

We are committed to consulting and working with communities to help us make informed decisions. This means talking and listening to everyone in the community, not only those who regularly use our services or actively offer their views.

We recognise that a targeted approach may be required to engage successfully with some members of local communities, to ensure that their views are properly taken into account. We will engage with representative groups to meet our duties, and we will encourage these groups to work with us to improve our services.

We gather customer information in a number of ways, including Carlisle Focus surveys, online surveys, face to face interviews, road shows, and consultation events. Our social media tools are an additional means of improving communication with customers and encouraging feedback on our services.

## Equality impact assessment

Equality impact assessments are about making sure that our services and policies are fair and to identify the impacts of these on groups of people within our community.

There are two stages to impact assessment:

- initial screening - an overview to assess if there are any equality issues and to see if any action can be taken to change the likely impact of a decision on a particular group.
- full impact assessment - a longer piece of work which relies on the findings of the initial screening to research and take action where impacts are judged to be unknown or are considered to be major.

An impact assessment should be proportionate to the proposed change and the potential impact on equality. We will undertake impact assessments of our policies and services to help inform our decision making. We will ensure that any potential negative consequences are removed or balanced out by either changing the policy or service, or introducing other measures alongside it.

## Procurement and commissioning

We recognise our responsibility as a major procurer of goods and services in the Cumbrian area. We need to ensure that the suppliers and contractors that we work with do not operate in a way that contradicts legislation or our equality policy.

Our Procurement and Commissioning Strategy sets out a clear framework for procurement activity and enables us to promote a positive approach to equality.

We request equality compliance in our tender documents and expect all potential providers to be committed to equality and diversity in their employment practices and service provision. Our aim is to ensure that suppliers, contractors and their agents provide goods, supplies and services that do not discriminate against people in any way. We will, if appropriate, monitor the successful provider's compliance throughout the term of the contract.

## Service delivery

We are committed to providing services that are responsive and accessible to all. People who use our services are entitled to do so free from discrimination and harassment.

Managing service delivery is about providing services, according to need, for everyone in the district. We continually look for ways to increase the flexibility of the services we provide so that they are more responsive and inclusive. We encourage residents to register for online services where possible and we also continue to work with partners to improve services in the community.

We will continue to ensure our customers' experiences are of the highest possible standard and they can confidently and easily access the Council services they need. Key to this is developing customer information to shape service delivery around our customers' needs.

We regularly measure customer satisfaction with our services and monitor other information such as complaints and customer contact data. We apply a consistent approach to recording equality information across our services and improving data quality.

## Communications and accessibility

Our website is designed to provide information in an easily accessible, intuitive structure. Our content is clear and presents our services in a confident way so that our customers know what they can expect from us.

We will continue to develop our services and ensure that they are accessible to all customers. This means that we will make information about our services accessible by:

- Using “Plain English” (language that an English speaking audience can understand and act upon from a single reading).
- Providing appropriate translation and interpretation for non-English speakers on request.
- Providing appropriate options for people with disabilities.
- Reviewing the way we publicise our services, to reach people not already using them.

Our communications guidance ensures that the images and language we use help to promote equality.

## Complaints and feedback

We value feedback and recognise the right of all our customers to complain, compliment or make a suggestion about any of our activities or services. We are committed to ensuring that we use customer feedback to help improve services and to focus on the needs of our customers. The Complaints and Feedback Policy contains further details on how any type of feedback concerning our functions and services is considered.

We encourage those submitting written complaints to provide equality information in order to establish if there are specific issues relating to one of the equality strands. All equality data collected remains confidential and anonymous.

# How we will deliver equality as an employer

## Employment

We will continue to develop our most important asset, our employees, to deliver our priorities and respond to the needs of our customers. Staff health and wellbeing is promoted in the workplace and we undertake a range of actions and initiatives to support this. We will continue to monitor and develop our workforce profile to ensure that we fulfil our equality reporting requirements. This will also help us to identify areas where we can support our employees.

## Recruitment and selection

Our workforce should reflect the diversity of the population of the district. We will achieve this by positively encouraging applications from those sections of the community that are currently under-represented in our workforce. As a major employer, we will aim to be a positive example of good practice to other employers in the district and Cumbria. Where a particular group is under-represented in an area of work and there is evidence of discrimination positive action may be taken. Our Recruitment and Selection procedures contain further information about this.

## Learning and development

We will provide appropriate learning and information resources to ensure that all employees and councillors understand and fulfil the organisation's commitment to equality. We will continue to work in partnership with other local authorities and organisations in Cumbria to develop best practice across the county by sharing information, developing training and procuring services to support equality work.

# Reporting equality information

We must provide information about how equality is considered in decision making, policy development and engagement. This information will be published within an annual equality report that includes progress of the following:

- equality objectives
- equality impact assessments
- workforce profile
- customer satisfaction
- complaints
- consultation and engagement

We will use this information to identify equality issues and develop areas for action or improvement. We will publish information in an accessible format and ensure it follows the principles of our Data Quality Policy, giving confidence to the users of the information. We will give details as to what we publish and why, explaining how the information is used. We will also acknowledge gaps in our data and explain how we can improve this.

Progress will be reported to Senior Management Team, the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny through the annual report and published on our website.

# Our equality objectives 2020-2024

Our equality objectives have been updated to develop the work of the previous objectives. Progress will be reported as part of the annual equality report.

<b>Equality objective</b>
<b>a) Break the cycle of inequality and improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity</b>
<b>Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Our vision is to improve the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the people of Carlisle. We have a key role in addressing health and wellbeing inequalities on a daily basis and have a positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable residents in Carlisle. This links to work that will be undertaken through the Joint Cumbria Public Health Strategy and Carlisle City Council's Healthy City Strategy. Health inequalities are the unjust differences in health between persons of different social groups and can be linked to forms of disadvantage such as poverty, discrimination and lack of access to services and goods. This links to the duty to advance equality of opportunity.
<b>Outcome or improvement sought by 2024</b>
Delivery of Carlisle Plan actions Delivery of Healthy City Strategy actions
<b>Baseline</b>
Quarter 1 Performance Report – Executive 16 September 2019 Healthy City Strategy and actions under development
<b>Lead team(s)</b>
All Council Services, Healthy City Team

## Equality objective

**b) Support a diverse workforce by improving the equality data of the recruitment and retention processes**

## Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty

Workforce data quality has improved since 2016 and shows an increase in employee diversity. Recruitment data continues to be developed and initial analysis highlights potential for improving the recruitment and selection process. This links to the duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to advance equality of opportunity.

## Outcome or improvement sought by 2024

Increased analysis and interpretation of quality data for all equality characteristics within the workforce profile

Balanced diversity in the workforce

Balanced Gender Pay Gap figures and pay quartiles

Balanced diversity in recruitment and retention data

## Baseline

Workforce profile in Annual Equality Report 2018/19

Workforce profile in Annual Equality Report 2018/19

Gender Pay Gap figures in Annual Equality Report 2018/9

Recruitment and selection data to be reported in Annual Equality Report 2019/20

## Lead team(s)

Human Resources, Policy and Communications

## Equality objective

**c) Ensure all people have access to the services they need**

## Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty

All customers should be able to confidently and easily access the Council services they need. This should be in a timely and appropriate manner, irrespective of where they live, their skills, knowledge and ability. Our Customer Service Charter sets out the standards of customer service we aim to provide. This links to the duty to advance equality of opportunity.

## Outcome or improvement sought by 2024

Improved satisfaction with our services

90% of corporate complaints to be dealt with within 15 working days

Achieve the aims of the Customer Service Charter Improved access to services and engagement through consultation and impact assessment

## Baseline

Customer satisfaction with Council Services was 72.6% very satisfied or satisfied in 2018/19<sup>1</sup>

In 2018/19, a full response to complaints was issued to 93.3% of customers within 15 days of receipt at each stage<sup>1</sup>

Draft Customer Service Charter under development

Equality impact assessment, consultation and service provision section in Annual Equality Report 2018/19

## Lead team(s)

All Council Services, Customer Services

## Equality objective

**d) Celebrate the diversity of our communities and bring people together**

## Rationale behind objective and link to the Public Sector Equality Duty

People should feel empowered to play a part in their communities, sharing spaces and activities. The development of sports, arts and cultural facilities and our events programme brings people together and celebrates our communities. We undertake a wide range of partnership working to build closer links with communities and support projects across the district. This links to the duty to foster good relations.

## Outcome or improvement sought by 2024

Improved satisfaction with Council run events

Continued success and development of community-based projects and working in partnership with others

## Baseline

Public satisfaction with Council run events was 89.2% in 2018/9<sup>1</sup>

Engagement section of Annual Equality Report 2018/19

## Lead team(s)

All Council Services, Healthy City Team, Policy and Communications

## Further information and feedback

We welcome feedback on our Equality Policy. If you have any comments or questions about how this policy affects you, please contact the Policy Team at:

**Email:** [policy@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:policy@carlisle.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01228 817258

**Post:**

Policy Team  
Carlisle City Council  
Civic Centre  
Rickergate  
Carlisle  
CA3 8QG

If you require this guide in an alternative format or language please contact us to discuss your needs.

For further information about our equality and diversity work please visit our website  
**<https://www.carlisle.gov.uk/Council/Council-and-Democracy/Equality-and-Diversity>**

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## **EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2020**

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### **HWSP.07/20 TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT – REVIEW OF EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

The Policy and Communications Manager presented report OS.28/19 which set out the work and recommendations of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Review of Equality Objectives.

The report provided an overview of the Council's Statutory duties in respect of Equalities, including requirements for the identification of Equality Objectives and an Equalities Plan, and the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had developed a number of objectives which reflected the Council's existing Equalities achievement and sought to build on them in the future. The draft Equality Policy, which included a table of amendments, was appended to the report.

The Policy and Communications Manager asked for some clarity regarding Equality Objective b). He asked if the aim of the objective was to address data quality issues or process issues.

Councillor McNulty and Councillor Brown, Members of the Task Group, commented that the issue related to the recruitment process. Several applicants who fell within the protected characteristic categories had applied for roles within the Council however the recruitment did not reflect the diversity of the applicants and therefore the diversity of Carlisle. The Task Group had asked for further data and had concerns regarding unconscious bias in the recruitment process. They felt that further recruitment training may be required on unconscious bias.

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that further data was required to understand why the workforce was not representative of the community. As a first step it was necessary to ascertain the conversion rate, then understand why each candidate was successful.

The Policy and Communications Manager suggested changing the wording of equality objective b) to:

Support a diverse workforce by improving the equality data of the recruitment and retention processes

In addition, the following suggestions were made for the "Outcome or improvement sought by 2024":

Increased analysis and interpretation of quality data for all equality characteristics within the workforce profile

Balanced diversity in the workforce

Balanced Gender Pay Gap figures and pay quartiles

Balanced diversity in recruitment and retention data

Recruitment and retention data to be reported in Annual Equality Report 2019/20

The Policy and Communications Manager gave an update on a number of the areas of development that were detailed in appendix 2 of the report.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member felt strongly that mental ill health had to be taken into consideration during the recruitment process and individual circumstances should be considered when dealing with the absence procedure and support for individuals.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed and reminded the Panel that the Council had excellent support system for all staff including those with mental ill health. In addition, the Council had been awarded the silver Better Health at Work Award and had aspirations to reach the next level. With regard to recruitment the Deputy Chief Executive agreed to review the training for those who recruited staff to ensure that a better understanding of unconscious bias was included.

- Were the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) fit for purpose? Were they regularly updated, was there training on how to carry them out and was the potential for intersectionality considered?

The Policy and Communications Manager explained that the level of EIA carried out depended on the decision being made and the impact of that decision. He agreed to circulate a full response to the Panel.

- How would the embedding of equality in Council services be monitored?

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that monitoring took place through the Annual Equality Action Plan and Workforce Plan which was scrutinised by the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

- A Member commented that it was important for equality to be included in the theme and contents of all Portfolio Holders reports and not just as an additional standard line.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder agreed that the narrative of Portfolio Holder reports could explain the benefit to the Council and the community of the decisions taken or about to be taken, this would make the reports a more useful document. He added that this would also be beneficial in Scrutiny Chairs' reports.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel had considered and commented on the draft Equality Objectives and the Equality Policy (OS.28/19);

2) That the Panel refer the draft Equality Objectives and Equality Policy to the Executive for consideration and consultation, prior to adoption with the following amendment to equality objective b):

Support a diverse workforce by improving the equality data of the recruitment and retention processes

In addition, the following suggestions were made for the “Outcome or improvement sought by 2024”:

Increased analysis and interpretation of quality data for all equality characteristics within the workforce profile

Balanced diversity in the workforce

Balanced Gender Pay Gap figures and pay quartiles

Balanced diversity in recruitment and retention data

Recruitment and retention data to be reported in Annual Equality Report 2019/20

- 3) That the Panel refer the ideas and areas for further development, as set out in appendix 2 of report OS.28/19, to the Executive to consider whether they can be investigated further through the Equality Action Plan;
- 4) That the draft Healthy City Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.
- 5) That the Policy and Communications Manager circulate further information to the Panel on Equality Impact Assessments.
- 6) That a review of recruitment training be undertaken to ensure training on unconscious bias was included.