

Urgent Decision Taken on Behalf of Cabinet

Report to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services

Report submitted by: Head of Service Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well)

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Equality Objectives

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Public authorities have specific duties under the Equality Act to help them comply with the public sector equality duty, including a requirement to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

The county council's corporate strategy; 'Our Vision for Lancashire', provides an opportunity to rethink and reframe the Council's Equality Objectives so that they are clearly aligned to the priorities set out in the corporate strategy. Proposed objectives are set out in the following report.

Reason for Urgency

This decision is urgent and cannot await the next meeting of Cabinet. The reason for this is that all formal meetings of the council, including Cabinet, have been cancelled for the foreseeable future and this decision has been deemed to be business critical by the relevant Executive Director.

This decision is therefore being taken on behalf of Cabinet by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order C16(1).

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C21 have been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to agree the Equality Objectives set out in table one of this report.

This decision should be implemented immediately for the purposes of Standing Order C29 as any delay could adversely affect the execution of the county council's responsibilities. The reason for this is that the decision has been designated as business critical by the relevant Executive Director, and any delay in its implementation would have an adverse effect on the operations of the county council.

Background and Advice

The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex and
- sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics under the Equality Act but not covered by all aspects of the public sector equality duty.

When public authorities carry out their functions, the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of protected characteristics, which is unlawful,
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and
- foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Public authorities also have specific duties under the Equality Act to help them comply with the public sector equality duty, including a requirement to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

The county council's equality objectives were last reviewed in 2016. The objectives agreed at that time were:

- To establish a robust and comprehensive system for relevant monitoring and performance review of employment and service data.
- To make sure our information and services are accessible to the people we serve.
- To make sure that all the communities we serve are satisfied with the information and services we provide.
- To build on our communities' trust and confidence in the county council.
- To support actions that improve the quality of life for all people in Lancashire through partnership working.
- To work with our partners to develop our approach to tackling hate crime and hate incidents throughout Lancashire.
- To work with our partners in providing effective support for asylum seekers and refugees who come to Lancashire.
- To work with our partners to effectively tackle extremism through delivery of the Prevent Duty and challenge intolerance of any kind across Lancashire and build stronger, more cohesive communities.
- To be a fair employer to all employees and job applicants, including those with protected characteristics in terms of our arrangements for recruitment, selection, terms and conditions and dismissal.

The county council's corporate strategy; 'Our Vision for Lancashire', provides an opportunity to rethink and reframe our Equality Objectives so that they are clearly aligned to existing priorities rather than "stand alone".

The following table outlines the proposed Equality Objectives for 2020 and beyond.

Table 1: Proposed Equality Objectives aligned to existing corporate objectives

Our Corporate Objectives	We will be a County Where	Our Equality Objectives
Lancashire will be the place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children of all abilities do well in our first class schools, colleges and universities, gaining skills for life. - People have good housing. - People live healthier lives for longer. - People can travel on good quality, reliable, public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will work to narrow the gaps between different groups – e.g. in life expectancy between men and women or in educational attainment, where some groups are disadvantaged. - We will improve the accessibility of our services, including through our digital offer. - We will work in partnership to improve the quality of life for all residents and visitors. - We will work with our partners to deliver effective support for the sustainable integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

<p>Lancashire will be the place to work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We support people of all ages to learn and develop their skills. - Significant new, good job opportunities are created. - We support and encourage business investment, innovation and growth. - We aim to increase the earning power of our residents and communities. - We build and develop effective infrastructure and transport links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will use our influence with third party providers and partners to help ensure fair and inclusive employment practices. - We will ensure that our investment in public infrastructure and transport actively considers the needs of all our communities.
<p>Lancashire will be the place to prosper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We invest in industry, and promote innovation to secure Lancashire's growth potential. - Businesses are supported to start up, to thrive and to grow. - We build on the strengths and resilience of local industry. - Our residents, businesses and places are enabled to be more productive. - We promote Lancashire as a national and global connected destination and a well performing place to do business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will help make it easier for people to travel across Lancashire, bringing communities together and connecting people to services, jobs and learning opportunities. - We will promote Lancashire as a cohesive county where people of different backgrounds get on well together.
<p>Lancashire will be the place to visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We celebrate our beautiful, clean landscapes. - We encourage the visitor economy and the opportunities for growth. - People enjoy our culture and heritage, diverse communities and local attractions. - We promote our wonderful sporting attractions and hidden gems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will promote and celebrate the diversity of Lancashire's population. - We will promote the inclusiveness of the county council's cultural attractions and facilities.

<p>Lancashire will be a place where everyone acts responsibly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will equip our most vulnerable people with the support and skills they need to do more for themselves. - We commission, procure and provide services that provide maximum benefit to Lancashire residents. - We recruit and retain a workforce that meets service needs. - We prevent waste and use money wisely. - We learn from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will ensure we are a fair and inclusive employer in our recruitment, employment, career development and retention activities. - We will improve the diversity of our workforce at all levels and narrow our gender pay gap. - We will work with our partners to build stronger, safer communities by tackling hate crime, radicalisation, extremism and intolerance of any kind. - We will ensure our service developments are informed by information we hold and engagement with service users and communities to best meet need. - We will consider the impact on groups with protected characteristics as a key part of our decision making process.
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Subject to agreement of the objectives, the Equality and Cohesion Team will establish a "light touch" mechanism to evidence achievement, making use of existing tools and data such as the *Equality Analysis Toolkit for Decision Making* and workforce equality data, including the gender pay gap analysis, which is published annually.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Legal

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the county council to prepare and publish equality objectives, at least every four years. The council will be in breach of its duties under the Equality Act if a set of equality objectives are not agreed and published.

Equality and cohesion

The equality objectives proposed are aligned to the county council's corporate strategy and will help to promote fairness and inclusion, and help to evidence how policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

Urgent Decision Taken on behalf of Cabinet: Declarations

Leader of the Council

Equality Objectives

Original recommendation, as set out in the report, approved without amendment. Yes/No *

Original recommendation amended and decision as follows: Yes/No *

I have a pecuniary/non-pecuniary interest in this matter. Yes/No *

If an interest is declared please give details below:

.....
Leader of the Council

15 April 2020

Chief Officer

I certify that this is an appropriate and accurate record within the terms of Standing Order C30(2) and (3) of the decision taken by the Cabinet Member.

.....
insert title of authorising officer

insert date

*Delete as appropriate

This decision is to be taken by more than one Cabinet Member and all relevant Cabinet Members must be in agreement with the decision

Urgent Decision Taken on behalf of Cabinet: Declarations

Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services

Equality Objectives

Original recommendation, as set out in the report, approved without amendment. Yes/No *

Original recommendation amended and decision as follows: Yes/No *

I have a pecuniary/non-pecuniary interest in this matter. Yes/No *

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Cabinet Member for Community and
Cultural Services

15 April 2020

Chief Officer

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