

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 11 July 2024

Report of the Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Refreshed Equality Objectives and Strategy 2024/28

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

As one of the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010's Public Sector Equality Duty, the county council is required to publish Equality Objectives at least every four years. A refreshed set of Equality Objectives and supporting Equality Strategy for the period 2024-28 are now presented for consideration.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the Equality Strategy and associated Equality Objectives as attached at Appendix 'A'.

Detail

In April 2020, the county council's Equality Objectives were approved. A specific duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public authorities produce and publish Equality Objectives at least every four years, which means that the county council's Equality Objectives now need to be refreshed.

There is no specific duty to produce an Equality Strategy, but this provides a context for the Equality Objectives and provides an opportunity to reflect the county council's corporate practices.



Four Equality Objectives have been developed to reflect issues which have emerged across the county council in recent times. The Equality Objectives are to:

- Develop an inclusive workforce which reflects our communities.
- Ensure services are inclusive and accessible.
- Enable participation and understanding of county council activities.
- Ensure everyone's experience is a respectful and inclusive one.

Within the strategy, each objective is underpinned by a number of components against which the success of the objectives can be assessed over time.

The Equality Objectives and Equality Strategy align with the county council's Corporate Strategy and the People Strategy. They are evidence based from sources such as the county council's staff survey and the annual Equality Information document which public authorities are also statutorily required to produce, and information from sections of the community.

The Equality Objectives and Equality Strategy will be supported by an Annual Delivery Plan which will be informed by a range of intelligence including the annual Equality Information report, submissions made as part of the county council's participation in the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard, Key Performance Indicators and relevant learning from the complaints and compliments process.

If approved the Equality Objectives and Equality Strategy are intended to be in place between 2024 and 2028, with annual reviews to assess progress based on current reporting processes.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Draft Corporate Equality Strategy

Consultations

The Equality Strategy was considered by the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 May 2024.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

Equality Objectives must be published at least every four years to comply with one of the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty provisions of the Equality Act 2010. There is no similar requirement to produce or publish an additional Equality Strategy. It is anticipated, however, that delivery of the Equality Strategy and its associated annual delivery plans will help bring focus to meeting the responsibilities



and help to minimise the risk of challenges or complaints under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, although the risk of such situations arising cannot be entirely removed.

Financial

The actions within the Equality Objectives, Equality Strategy and associated annual delivery plans will be contained within the existing financial envelope.

Risk management

Equality and Cohesion

Effective implementation of the Equality Objectives, Equality Strategy and associated annual delivery plans should contribute positively to meeting the three general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty which are:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation or other conduct which is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
- advancing equality of opportunity for groups with protected characteristics including increasing their participation in public life; and
- fostering good relations between groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not share them.

The approval of the Equality Objectives for publication will also ensure that the county council complies with the relevant specific duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		

