

## North Norfolk District Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025

**Summary:** All public authorities are required to publish one or more equality objectives, at least every four years, which they think should help them to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition the Equality Act 2010 requires that people be treated fairly at work or when using services. The Equality strategy sets out the Council's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and four key equality objectives which the Council will seek to deliver against over the next four years.

**Options considered:** The Council is legally required to publish its Equality objectives and it has been considered that the best way to do this is in the form of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

**Conclusions:** To recommend to Full Council the formal adoption of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025

**Recommendations:** **To recommend to Full Council the formal adoption of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025**

**Reasons for Recommendations:** The Council is legally required to publish its Equality objectives and it has been considered that the best way to do this is in the form of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy will need to be formally adopted by Full Council

### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

*(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)*

None

Cabinet Member(s)                      Ward(s) affected – all

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 All public authorities are required to publish one or more equality objectives, at least every four years, which they think should help them to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition the Equality Act 2010 requires that people be treated fairly at work or when using services.
- 1.2 It was considered that the best way of setting out the Council's commitment to equality and the communication of its equality objectives was through the development of a strategy.
- 1.3 It was considered that the promotion of diversity and inclusion are also important elements of health and wellbeing and quality of life and that these should also be incorporated into the Council's equality objectives. The Council has therefore developed an Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy covering the period 2021-2025.

## **2. Main body of report**

- 2.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025 sets out the Council's legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 2.2 It further sets out an Equality Statement which articulates the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion to the Council and four key equality objectives and commitments relating to its role as a community leader, service provider and employer. It is intended that these commitments can be formed into actions to be delivered as part of an annual action planning process over the lifetime of the strategy.
- 2.3 The Council is conscious that it is in the early stages of developing a robust response to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and proposes to use the Local Government Association's Equalities Framework to self-assess its progress and to inform the further development of this Strategy and action plans.
- 2.4 The Council is also conscious that data gathering relating to the protected characteristics and on equality, diversity and inclusion more generally, needs to be improved to inform the further development of the Strategy and action planning. The Council will undertake a review of the Strategy and action plans once data from the 2021 Census is available in order to ensure their continued relevance in progressing these agendas.
- 2.5 The Council will strengthen its response to equality, diversity and inclusion in the development of key corporate strategies including the Engagement Strategy, Customer Services Strategy and Customer Charter and Quality of Life Strategy. The Engagement Strategy will determine how we will engage and consult with residents and communities of interest and in particular hard to reach groups which are most vulnerable to suffering disadvantage. The Customer Services Strategy will determine how we design our services to ensure that they are as responsive as possible and accessible to all. The Quality of Life Strategy will seek to ensure that there is a good quality of life for all residents of the district and seek where possible to improve people's

life chances and address health inequalities where there is evidence that some residents or communities are suffering disadvantage.

### **3. Corporate Plan Objectives**

- 3.1 Customer Focus – the Council has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that people are treated fairly when using services. It will be important therefore to ensure a robust consideration of the needs of customers with protected characteristics in the design and delivery of services. The new Customer Services Strategy will be a key corporate strategy through which the Council can deliver against its equality objectives.
- 3.2 Quality of Life – equality, diversity and inclusion are key factors in health and wellbeing and quality of life. The new Quality of Life Strategy will be a key corporate strategy through which the Council can deliver against its equality objectives.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Council is legally required to publish its Equality objectives and it has been considered that the best way to do this is in the form of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy will need to be formally adopted by Full Council.

### **5. Medium Term Financial Strategy**

### **6. Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial implications. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025 will be delivered as part of the Council's mainstream activity.

### **7. Legal Implications**

The Council is legally required to publish its Equality objectives. If the Council did not fulfill its legal requirement it could be subject to legal challenge. The Council also needs to protect itself against legal challenge in respect of its duty to ensure that people are treated fairly at work or when using services. The best way to ensure that the Council protects itself is to positively promote equality, diversity and inclusion through a strategy and support this work through education and training.

### **8. Risks**

Equality, diversity and inclusion are key factors in health and wellbeing and quality of life. If the Council does not engage positively in these agendas it will be less effective in its community leadership role, as a service provider and as an employer

### **9. Sustainability**

Embracing equality, diversity and inclusion will have a positive impact on sustainability. Our communities and businesses will thrive and we will see a lower turnover in staff and increased productivity.

### **10. Equality and Diversity**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025 sets out the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

**11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations**

Community Safety, zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment and supporting vulnerable groups are key aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion resulting in reduced community tensions and reduced levels of crime and disorder.