

## North Norfolk District Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021

**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, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021 sets out the Council's approach to demonstrate its compliance with the Act.

**Options considered:** The Council is legally required to publish its equality objectives. It is doing this alongside the publication of its refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021.

**Recommendations:** To recommend to Full Council the formal adoption of its Equality Objectives and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021.

**Reasons for Recommendations:** The Council is legally required to publish Equality Objectives. It is doing this alongside the publication of its refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021. The Equality Objectives and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will need to be formally adopted by Full Council

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr S Butikofer, Leader	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. The best way of setting out the Council's commitment to and approach to equality is through the publication of an Equality Policy.
- 1.3. The Council does not have a policy resource or specific expertise in equality, diversity and inclusion. Norfolk County Council has a policy team with specific expertise in a wide range of areas covering equality, diversity and inclusion. The County Council offers a service to assist organisations in the

development of their equality policy at very reasonable rates and this service has been commissioned to assist in the production of the equality policy for this Council.

## **2. Overview**

- 2.1. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021 sets out the Council's approach to demonstrate compliance with its legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010. The Council is setting out 4 Equality Objectives to be published alongside the refreshed Equality Policy in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, as follows;
  1. This Council will review access to its services in order to develop a range of access points and modes with a view to making its services as responsive and accessible as possible to all service users
  2. This Council will review its consultation and engagement activities to ensure that the voices of local communities are at the heart of strategy and policy development and service design
  3. This Council will work in partnership with residents, community representatives, businesses, voluntary and statutory partners and external organisations to promote equality, diversity and inclusion to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and to eradicate exploitation, prejudice and discrimination
  4. This Council will lead by example in promoting and celebrating the diversity of our communities and seek to reflect the diversity of the North Norfolk District Council area in our workforce
- 2.2 The 4 Equality Objectives relate to the Council in 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 next 4 years. Progress against these objectives will be assessed and as appropriate new objectives proposed.
- 2.3 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 equality objectives. The Council will undertake a review of the Equality Objectives and action plans once data from the 2021 Census is available in order to ensure their continued relevance in progressing these agendas.
- 2.4 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 level up where there is evidence that some residents or communities are suffering disadvantage.

- 2.5 The Council will publish its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021 and Equality Objectives and will make the documents available for comment to its employees and communities via the Intranet and Internet.

### **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**

The Council is legally required to publish its Equality Objectives and it is doing so alongside a refreshed Equality Policy. The Equality Objectives and Equality Policy will need to be formally adopted by Full Council.

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

There are no direct financial implications related to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy or Equality objectives.

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

There are no financial implications. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will inform how the Council conducts its business as a community leader, service provider and employer and will lead to consideration of these issues being a part of its 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 Policy 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 Policy 2021 and Equality Objectives set out the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and inclusion.

**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.