

Management Committee

10 July 2018

Adoption of Dorset Shared Equality Objectives and Dorset Councils Partnership Equality Objectives for 2018-19

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr Jon Orrell, Social Inclusion

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author: Jane Nicklen, Community Planning & Development Manager

Statutory Authority

The Equality Act, 2010

Purpose of Report

1. To satisfy the Councils public sector equality duties under The Equality Act, 2010 by approving the Dorset Shared Equality Objectives and proposed Dorset Councils Partnership Equality Objectives for 2018-19.

Recommendations

- 2 To approve:
 - a) The Dorset Shared Equality Objectives for 2018-19 at Appendix 1
 - b) The Dorset Council Partnership Equality Objectives for 2018-19 at Appendix 2

Reason for Decision

- 3 The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation. The act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person, the act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace and when providing goods, facilities and services. The act also protects people from being treated less favourably because of certain characteristics. These are known as 'protected characteristics which are, Age, Disability, Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or Belief, and Sexual orientation.

4. In addition, Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act sets both general and specific duties to which public bodies are legally bound. The General Duty requires the council to have 'due regard' to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
5. In addition, the General Equality Duties are supported by two specific duties:
 - Publish information to evidence their compliance with the general duties
 - Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives, every four years to demonstrate how the council is meeting the aims of the general equality duty.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

6. Dorset Equality Partnership and Equality Scheme

The Dorset Equality Scheme aims to embed the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality in everything that its membership does. The Dorset Equality Scheme details the key equality objectives for 2018-19, it also demonstrates the work that Dorset councils are doing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. It incorporates shared equality objectives with colleagues from the Dorset Equality Partnership (Christchurch Borough Council, Dorset Councils Partnership, East Dorset District Council and Purbeck District Council).

This co-ordinated approach to equality and diversity will be more effective and lead to a better understanding of local need, especially going forward with LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) in April 2019.

The Dorset Equality Scheme Shared Objectives have had feedback from the Forum for Equality & Diversity (FED). The Equality Objectives identified aim to champion diversity, inclusion and equality within Dorset. The outcomes from the objectives will be monitored on a regular basis by the DCP Equality Working Group.

The proposed objectives for adoption are detailed at Appendix 1 of this report.

7. Dorset Councils Partnership Equality Objectives for 2018-19

The Partnership established its own Equality Working Group in November 2017. This comprises the portfolio holders with equalities within their remit, a Strategic Director, the Equalities Officer and representatives from Human Resources and Organisational Development, Customer Services and unions.

The purpose of the group is:

- To ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and reduce any potential risk to the councils.
- To ensure that the Councils understand the impact that their services have on their citizens with particular regard to people's protected characteristics and minimise any negative impacts wherever possible to promote access to services for all.
- To promote access to services for all citizens, communities and visitors.
- To assist with the development and implementation of the Equality Policy and Action Plan for the councils.
- To co-ordinate, monitor and review the Council's performance and progress in complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation relevant to equality and diversity.

At its first meeting the Equalities Working Group agreed an action plan and the Equalities Objectives for 2018-9 are based on this. The core areas for action were:

- i. Accessibility of equalities and diversity information
- ii. Council offices that are equalities friendly
- iii. Council offices that are dementia friendly
- iv. Improving the frequency and quality of Equalities Impact Assessments relating to significant service and policy changes

These are reflected in the draft DCP Equality Objectives proposed for adoption at Appendix 2.

Corporate Plan

Equalities work falls within the Corporate Plan priority:

- Empower Thriving and Inclusive Communities

Financial

Most of the work involving equalities is undertaken within existing budgets, this includes officer time, adaption to building signage and facilities and work to place accessible information on the Intranet and Dorsetforyou.

Equalities

This report is pursuant to the DCP equality duties within the Equality Act, 2010

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

This report is pursuant to the DCP equality duties within the Equality Act, 2010

Human Resources

Work on equalities is undertaken by staff in the course of their day to day work. Human Resources and Organisational Development have a particular role in monitoring and reporting diversity within the workforce.

Consultation and Engagement

Consultation on DCP Equality objectives has taken place with key equality organisations within the respective DCP areas.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Shared Equalities Objectives

Appendix 2 – Draft Equality Objectives for Dorset Councils Partnership

Background Papers

The Equality Act, 2010

Notes of the Equalities Working Group Meeting of 11 November 2017

Notes of Dorset Equalities Partnership Meeting, 3 April 2018

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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