

Shadow Dorset Council

Date of Meeting	14 January 2019
Lead Member	Councillor Peter Wharf
Officer	Susan Ward-Rice Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Dorset County Council
Subject of Report	Dorset Council Equality Scheme
Executive Summary	This report presents a draft Equality Scheme for Dorset Council 2019 -2023. It sets out how the council will meet its legal duties under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 on 'day 1', and how the new council can promote diversity, equality and inclusion as service providers, commissioners and employers in order to meet those duties. Local authorities are required to publish equality objectives at least every four years. This report details the proposed equality objectives for Dorset Council from its inception.
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: See Appendix 2
	Use of Evidence: The Dorset Council Equality Scheme draws from current equality schemes of the sovereign councils.
	Budget: It is expected that the council's equality objectives will be delivered within the existing budgets and no additional financial implications are anticipated.
	Risk Assessment: Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the LGR approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as: Current Risk: MEDIUM Residual Risk: MEDIUM

	Other Implications: None.
Recommendation	It is proposed that the Shadow Executive Committee approve the Dorset Council Equality Scheme detailed in appendix 1.
Reason for Recommendation	Adoption of the Dorset Council Equality Scheme 2019-23 by Dorset Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty as specified by the Equality Act 2010; and • provide a measurable and accountable framework for the Council's work to promote diversity, inclusion and equality, as service providers, commissioners and employers.
Appendices	Appendix 1: Dorset Council Equality Scheme Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers	None.
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1. Background

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous 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 person with a disability, the act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace and when providing goods, facilities and services.

1.2 The act also protects people from being treated less favourably because of certain characteristics, these are known as 'protected characteristics' which are;

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

1.3 The act includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) which 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 by the act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

1.4 The general duty is supported by specific duties; their purpose is to help public bodies meet the general duty and these are:

- To publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty.
- To 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.

1.5 The equality duty applies across all local authority business e.g. services, policy-making, employment, planning, procurement and statutory decision making.

1.6 The Equality and Human Rights Commission are responsible for monitoring and enforcing the equality duty.

2. Current position

2.1 Currently, some of the sovereign councils in Dorset have individual equality objectives, however, Dorset County Council and Dorset Council Partnership approved number of shared equality objectives for 2018-19.

2.2 Advice was sought from the Equality and Human Rights Commission about what requirements should be in place for the new council on the 1 April 2019. The Commission advised that the new authority must prepare and publish one or more equality objectives. The Commission recommended developing a small number of high level objectives, which could be developed further as the new council evolves in the first year or two, developing and updating the objectives as required.

2.3 Appendix 1 details the proposed equality objectives for Dorset Council, taking into account, the advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3. Proposed equality objectives for Dorset Council

- 3.1 The proposed Dorset Council Equality Scheme aims to embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that the council does. The Dorset Council Equality Scheme details the key equality objectives for the next four years (2019- 2023), it will also demonstrate the work Dorset Council is doing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty from 'day 1'.
- 3.2 The Dorset Council Equality Scheme 2019-2023 (detailed in Appendix 1) proposes three key equality objectives focusing on the council's workforce and the services it provides. The objectives have been developed with members of the Equality and Diversity Lead Members Working Group (the Equality and Diversity Lead Members from each of the sovereign councils).
- 3.3 It is proposed that action plans are developed to deliver the equality objectives and progress will be reviewed annually in accordance with the new council's emerging governance structures.