

Cabinet

10 September 2024

Equality, Diversity Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr R Holloway, Corporate Development and Transformation

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Report Status: Public

1. Brief Summary

1.1 Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy describes what we plan to do over the next four years to deliver better outcomes for those living and working in Dorset. The strategy frames proposed action around four key objectives:

- Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities
- Demonstrate our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services
- Develop and support a diverse and engaged workforce

1.2 The strategy and action plan were developed through engagement with employees and stakeholders, including colleagues from the voluntary and community sector.

1.3 We met with representatives from our EDI Reference Group, employee networks, trade unions and senior officers throughout 2022, 2023 and 2024.

1.4 The EDI strategy has been developed using data on the profile of our local communities and the make-up of the council's workforce. Work has been undertaken to provide definitions for each of our 7 local characteristics which have been taken from the 2021 census. The Local Government Association's Equality Framework

has been used as a tool to assess our progress on EDI to date and to help shape our future direction of work.

1.5 A detailed action plan has been developed, which assigns actions to officers.

1.6 The draft EDI Strategy and Action Plan was discussed at People and Health Overview committee on 23 July 2024. Committee members received answers from officers and from Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation, to various questions about the strategy and action plan. There was a specific request from the committee concerning the action plan to review the number of actions, and ensure that specific metrics are in place to enable monitoring of progress. The action plan has been updated to reflect this feedback.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Support the adoption and supporting definitions for the 7 local protected characteristics.

2.2 Approve the EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

2.3 Approve the supporting detailed EDI Action Plan which covers the period 2024-2027.

3. Reason for Recommendation

3.1 As a council we have legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 which are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity, and
- Promote good relations between different groups of people.

3.2 We have also identified 7 local protected characteristics: the EDI strategy and supporting action plan provide an opportunity to show how we are responding to these specific groups.

3.3 It is also recognised that there is continuing and persistent inequality in society and, as a council, we have an influential community leadership role in challenging that inequality. We can ensure that what we do is always for the benefit of Dorset's residents by:

- Delivering high quality responsive services and improving customer care
- Delivering fair and equal access for all to facilities and services, free from discrimination
- Supporting a diverse and engaged workforce that represents the communities we serve
- Being more efficient – providing value for money with improved and targeted services and savings.

3.4 To ensure that our workplace and our services are meeting the needs of everyone, we have a responsibility to listen and respond better. As one of the county's largest employers, we also have a responsibility to lead by example.

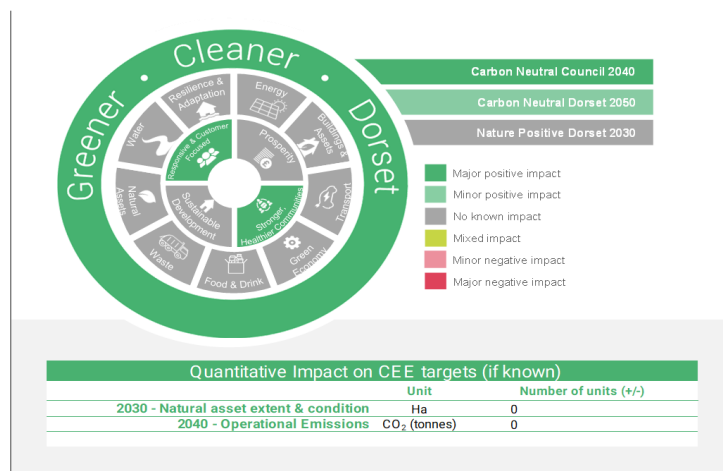
3.5 The strategy and action plan make an essential contribution to the achievement of all five priorities set out in the Council Plan. In particular, this strategy aims to support the achievement of the council's vision by focusing on the priorities of 'creating stronger, healthier communities' and a diverse and engaged workforce to enable us to 'become a more responsive, customer-focused council'.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are negative financial implications if we do not consider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as part of normal business activity. The proposed EDI Strategy and Action Plan aim to mitigate this implication. For example, failure to consider EDI may result in judicial review or employment tribunal cases.

5. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

5.1 Overall, the strategy currently seeks to have a carbon neutral impact. The current assessment illustrated in the table below is high level only. Assessments will be completed for the detailed delivery plan actions as they are developed.



Accessible Table showing impacts

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	
Energy	Impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
Corporate Plan Aims	
Prosperity	Impact
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	strongly supports it
Responsive & Customer Focused	strongly supports it

6. Wellbeing and Health Implications

6.1 Implementation of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan is likely to have a positive impact on well-being and health implications for our employees and residents living in the Dorset Council area.

7. Other Implications

7.1 There are no other identified implications.

8. Risk Assessment

8.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as: low

Current Risk: low

Residual Risk: low

9. Equalities Impact Assessment

9.1 The whole purpose of this EDI Strategy and Action Plan is to have a positive impact on our employees and residents living within the Dorset Council area. The Equality Impact Assessment for the EDI Strategy and Action Plan is included as Appendix 3 to this report.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

Appendix 2: Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (Detailed) 2024-2027

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4: Recommendation from the People and Health Overview Committee see the [Minutes of 23 July 2024](#)

11. Background Papers

11.1 None