

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2028
Equality Statement

Equality & Equity: Equality focuses on providing equal rights and opportunities to all. Equity recognises that treating everyone equally has shortcomings when the playing field is not level. An equity approach emphasises that everyone should not be treated the same, but according to their own needs.

Diversity: Diversity refers to the demographic differences of a group in a community, or at team or organisational level.

Inclusion: Inclusion is ensuring that everyone, regardless of their identity, background or circumstance feels valued, welcomed, respected, included, represented, and heard so they feel that they fully belong and have a voice.

This document sets out how Melton Borough Council aims to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and fulfils the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. We want to promote good relationships and challenge discrimination and harassment so that Melton can be a place where people get along with one another and treat each other with fairness, dignity and respect. We want people to feel happy living in the local area. The population of our district is becoming more diverse, and we know that people have very different backgrounds and life experiences. Fairness is essential to delivering both our public services and employment practices. It is important that we provide services, facilities and policies which meet community and employee needs by designing and delivering them in a way that is appropriate and accessible for all.

As a Local Authority we have a legal and a moral duty to our residents, our service users, our employees and our elected members. The Equality objectives ensure we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the nine protected characteristics. But we go further and include those groups who are socially or economically disadvantaged and recognises that, for example, carers/care leavers, gypsies & travellers, ex-service personnel, asylum seekers and refugees, are also distinct groups that may experience inequality and discrimination.

The objectives within our action plan sets out what we will do over the next four years to:

- Reinforce the council's responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and our role as community leaders, service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services.
- Ensure equality of opportunity across all sections of the community, and our workforce. To ensure our services to all residents are provided fairly and without discrimination.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion across our staff and among our residents, to ensure the removal of unfair discrimination and disadvantage, harassment, and to foster good relations, in the workplace and between different community groups.
- Support staff at all levels to approach their work with an open mind and to offer support and assistance to others without relying on preconceptions.

As an authority, we want to ensure that the values of 'fairness, dignity and respect' are embedded within the hearts and minds of our workforce, our elected members, our partners, our contractors and the communities we serve.

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Key Highlights of The Year:

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Progress Status	Action required / No evidence	Some action / in progress	Confident/ Completed
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Action	Step/s required to deliver the action	Responsible Officer & Target Date.	Progress Status	Update	Risks
Objective 1: Engage in appropriate, target driven ways that are always accessible.					
1.1	We provide advice and information in the most appropriate way to meet individual needs.	Ensure our website meets with the new accessibility standards for public sector websites. Whilst there has been positive feedback from the website in general and 100% accessibility achieved, it is acknowledged that there is more to be done in relation to specific areas such as CRM (front-facing functions), and individual policy uploads which do not meet 100% accessibility criteria. These areas will be focused on in more detail with our Corporate and Communications colleagues to identify specific areas and addressed individually.	August 2024 and ongoing Corporate Engagement and Comms representative		
1.2	Consultation informs our equality priorities at Melton Borough Council.	Ensure that services plan consultation and engagement into their business planning at an early stage.	Ongoing Actions All (with support from Corporate Services).		

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		Ongoing Actions All (with support from Corporate Services).			
		Target date tbc with Corporate services			
		Target date tbc with Corporate services			
1.3	We continue the work of the 'Prospective Councillor' programme to encourage nominations from protected	Interactive Training for Members.	This action needs to be considered prior to and post electoral		

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Action		Step/s required to deliver the action	Responsible Officer & Target Date.	Progress Status	Update	Risks
	/ under-represented groups.		campaigns and dates. Democracy	Red		
		Social Media Campaigns and member panels to encourage public awareness and participation	Democracy			
Objective 2: Develop and support a diverse workforce (being recognised as an employer of choice).						
2.1	We continue developing and maintaining our representative and inclusive workforce.	Attract, recruit, and retain individuals with both physical and hidden disabilities in line with Disability Confident Leader status. Ensure job adverts have equalities statement.	Ongoing Action HR	Yellow		
		Monitor the characteristics of those applying for jobs and those being successful.	Ongoing Action HR			

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2.2	The effects of all employment procedures have been assessed, and action has been taken to mitigate any adverse impact identified and to promote equality of opportunity.	Policies reviewed on a three-year cycle and consulted on through the check and challenge group. All new or changed policies etc., will be reviewed when the need arises.	Ongoing Action HR			
2.3	Any harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly, and that appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.	Bullying and Harassment policy reviewed every three years using guidance from the EHRC.	Ongoing Action HR			
2.4	The working environment is accessible	<p>Consideration as part of workstation and asset reviews.</p> <p>Do we challenge developers as part of the planning process regarding accessibility both pre and post planning applications.</p> <p>Existing assets and/or policies should be reviewed for accessibility compliance and/or due regard.</p>	<p>Ongoing action in line with progress on the asset development plan.</p> <p>HR & Corporate Asset Manager</p>			

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			Planning Manager			
		Accessibility audits to be carried out using Building Regulations part M for guidance.	Corporate Assets			
Objective 3: The Council have publicly committed to reducing inequalities, strengthening community cohesion and challenging discrimination. Therefore, there needs to be active work to further raise the profile of ED&I within the Council.						
3.1	MBC and its partners have a strong understanding of the quality of relations between different communities.	Collectively monitor relations and tensions.	Ongoing Action Strategic Lead for Safer Communities / all			
		Actively promote the importance of reporting all hate incidents related to age, disability, gender identity, race, religion / belief or sexual orientation)	Strategic Lead for Safer Communities			
		Harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly, and appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified	Strategic Lead for Safer Communities			

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3.2	It is recognised that anti-social behaviour is both a cause and effect of other vulnerabilities such as substance misuse, abuse, mental health issues etc. Housing and Communities (together with its partners) will oversee this demand in a more holistic way looking at the root causes and demonstrating a more qualitative overview for Melton.	Collaborative work between Strategic Leads of the Integrated People Offer to address escalating issues and community tensions using a more holistic approach	Strategic Leads for Integrated People Offer			
<p align="center">Objective 4: Ensure services are in place or commissioned which are inclusive, responsive, and foster good relations with and within the community (understanding difference and celebrating diversity).</p>						

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4.1	Using appropriate tools and data more effectively to target people where need is identified.	The target audience of each activity should be considered alongside an EIA, where it can be identified if specific groups will be impacted.	Continuous Learning & Engagement Corporate Engagement Representative to support across departments			
		Identify relevant data sets & information. The identified data and information is made available to staff, in order to support the assessment and monitoring of local needs, identify key equality gaps & priorities and inform corporate policy/strategy, equality objectives and service planning – this can then be leaned on to complete EIAs and inform activities, strategies and services.	Continuous Learning & Engagement Corporate Engagement Representative to support across departments			
4.2	A proactive approach to the management of need from our most vulnerable residents Co-ordinating a joined-up approach to service delivery with our statutory,	Promote, maintain and sustain investment into our early intervention services.	Strategic Leads within Integrated People Offer Senior Leadership Team			

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voluntary and community sector partners. Moving beyond reactively responding to presenting issues and identifying root causes early on.					
	Increase referrals to such services through wider promotion both within the Council and to our external partners.	Strategic Lead for Connecting & Enabling Communities			
4.3 To ensure that resources and services continue to develop and improve, residents need to be involved in identifying what fundamental changes need to be made to influence and change issues that people have within their communities. We want residents to influence how they wish to regenerate the area where they live, socialise and work. We will also ensure that underrepresented groups are supported in this process.	This is cross-cutting with action 1.2	All departments			

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4.4	As homelessness is a national priority and increasing at a national level, we need to ensure that in carrying out our statutory functions, we pay due regard to Equality Implications and protected characteristics.	<p>Specific training to front line officers to ensure residents with protected characteristics are given due regard.</p> <p>Policies and communications are in plain language avoiding jargon and the use of language services where required and proportionate.</p>				
5. Additional cross-cutting actions which incorporate all the objectives						
5.1	Review Equality Policy to be both inward and outward facing and incorporate our commitments to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion into one document.	<p>Review existing Policy and identify/incorporate gaps and changes identified to align with existing equality objectives.</p> <p>Ensure item is tabled on Forward Plan.</p>	<p>August 2024</p> <p>HR Strategic Leads for Equalities</p> <p>ED&I Officer</p>			