

# **PEOPLE COMMITTEE**

**14 NOVEMBER 2018**

## **REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

### **ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the People Committee on the progress made by the Council to embed Equality and Diversity within service, policy development and delivery; work undertaken to meet our public sector equality duty as required by equality legislation and deliver services which are accessible and meet the needs of Melton's residents.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That members note and comment as appropriate on the progress made in meeting our equalities duties and commitments as outlined in this report.**

#### **3.0 KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Melton Borough Council (MBC) publishes a Single Equality Scheme (SES) which covers all our legal duties as required by The Equality Act 2010. The SES sets out the Council's objectives and approach to advancing equality and diversity, fostering good relations and in tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The initial scheme which ran from 2012-2016 was updated and agreed by the Governance Committee in November 2015 and by full Council in December 2015. It covers the period 2016 - 2020.
- 3.2 As the Single Equality Scheme is included within the Council's Constitution any changes to the scheme will need to be presented to full Council for approval.
- 3.3 The Council is also required by legislation to set one or more specific equality objectives every four years. The first set of objectives ran until April 2016. A second set of equality objectives were agreed at the Governance Committee in November 2015 and form part of the SES and Action Plan 2016-20. They build on the work that the Council has undertaken and have been identified as being the most relevant to the authority and the Community.
- 3.4 The 4 equality objectives for the period 2016-2020 are set out below:
- i. Ensure that we engage, consult and communicate in appropriate and accessible ways and empower under-represented groups and individuals to participate in society and at work.
  - ii. Ensure services are accessible, responsive and appropriate for all our community
  - iii. Instil confidence within the community to report, tackle and prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment and hate incidents experienced by people in relation to their protected characteristic

- iv. Be recognised as an employer of choice for people from all communities ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all
- 3.5 The Equality Scheme's main delivery mechanism is through the Action Plan which is based on a number of actions designed to deliver the four objectives noted above. A number of these actions are also linked to the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 3.6 The report considers each objective sequentially. Some actions have been completed and/or reported upon in previous annual reports.
- 3.7 **PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES:**
- i. Ensure that we engage, consult and communicate in appropriate and accessible ways and empower under-represented groups and individuals to participate in society and at work.

**Consultation Toolkit** – MBC is continually looking to develop solutions to better consult, engage and involve people from all communities in the council's decision making process at as early a stage as possible. To help achieve this aim we have developed a consultation toolkit with equality monitoring underpinning the engagement principles of all our consultations. The toolkit recognises the need to consider different methodologies and creativity to ensure consultation is open and accessible to all relevant groups by offering a wide range of solutions and guidance to aid the decision making process.

**Website** – The Equalities pages on the Council's website have recently been updated. The website is one mechanism used to ensure that we communicate effectively with the community about our equality priorities. The equality pages include information on the Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objectives; equalities legislation and the Equality Framework for Local Government; equality monitoring; equality impact assessments; the workforce profile, Human Rights and useful sources of information. The Information contained on the website can also be obtained on request in accessible formats.

**Press Releases** – MBC also provides pro-active press releases to the community and staff which are currently monitored and progress will form part of the final report on the Strategy in 2020.

- ii. Ensure services are accessible, responsive and appropriate for all our community.

**Core Values** – At Melton we aim to ensure that fairness & respect is embedded within the hearts and minds of our workforce, partners and the community we serve. Embedding fairness into day to day activities is very much part of the new workforce strategy. The emphasis is on the core values and behaviours that staff have with each other which is ultimately reflected in the services they deliver. These behaviours and values will be linked through to the staff appraisal system where people will be assessed against them. In addition, a number of actions in the corporate delivery plan identifies some major priorities which link into Equality and Diversity.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** – Undertaking an EIA is important to ensure our services, policies, practices, functions and procedures are accessible especially to those groups of people protected by equalities law. Management Team discuss forthcoming service change and the accompanying equalities impact assessment to ensure that they are picked up at an early stage.

**Check & Challenge Group** – Due to the Council's recent restructure, the Check and Challenge group is going through a refresh of its membership and Terms of Reference. The group provides advice and guidance to managers on any equality implications when undertaking an EIA relating to policies, services, practices, procedures or functions. The group also forms part of the formal approval process and monitors actions arising from completed EIAs whilst ensuring signed-off EIAs are published on the Council's website. Training will be provided to all new members of the Check & Challenge group on the EIA form and the role of the group.

**Procurement** – A very important legislative requirement is to ensure that the services contracted out to other providers treat people with fairness and respect. All staff at Melton responsible for procurement have received relevant training on how to use the procurement template documents including the standard equality questions. Modern Slavery questions now form part of the standard questions asked as part of a tender and where relevant, additional equality questions are also included.

- iii. Instil confidence within the community to report, tackle and prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment and hate incidents experienced by people in relation to their protected characteristic

**Incident reporting** – MBC has ongoing plans to tackle hate crimes, discrimination, bullying and harassment experienced by residents. The Council also has an ongoing campaign to encourage witnesses to report such incidents through instilling confidence and educating people about these issues.

**Community Safety Partnership** – The Council is represented in the County at the Community Safety Partnership which develops plans and partnership work related to various community safety needs including Hate, Bullying and Harassment (all of which are linked to being different). MBC are also an active player in supporting "Victim First" work who provide solutions for victims of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) & Hate incidents.

**National Hate Awareness Week** – As part of National Hate Awareness Week (13-20th October 2018) a number of events were organised including:

- Updating the Secure Melton Against Retail Theft (SMART) scheme to re-launch the Safe Place Scheme
- Campaign posters displayed at various areas across Melton such as community centres, supermarkets and Council offices
- Information circulated to resident groups in Melton. Also a number of Awareness sessions were delivered by the ASB officer.
- A banner was displayed in the main offices building and enquiries were directed to ASB officer at MBC
- All Melton Borough Council social media channels participated in promoting the messages for this year: Stamp IT OUT, Wipe Out Hate, Cut Out Hate

- Town Centre chat (at various locations at different times) with the Police & ASB Officer

#### **Other initiatives:**

- Presentations on “Valuing the Difference” are delivered on regular basis together with Leicestershire Police at various schools in the borough.
  - Pocket size cards and information leaflets about reporting Hate are handed out to people at different locations and venues.
  - The “Keep Safe Places” scheme & venues are used to encourage people to report any concerns. Advice and support is tailored to every case individually.
  - Providing a ‘Buddy Family’ for Syrian families to give them reassurance of living in the Melton area and also achieve better integration outcomes. This is part of the ongoing “Syrian Refugees Support Scheme”.
  - Raising awareness about the differences between Anti Social Behaviour & Hate incidents at different residents’ meetings and patch walks with partners.
  - Working alongside LLC partners in implementing “Celebrate Safety” campaigns in Melton around Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas. Advice and education campaigns are delivered before events to raise people awareness on how to report any issues (mainly targeted incidents) if encountered throughout festive season.
  - Working continuously to identifying “hard to reach” groups and introduce services that are available to them. Some groups (e.g. disabled people, those lacking confidence etc) do not engage with the campaigns and services for various reasons related to their own circumstances (such as access, lack of information, communication barriers). Therefore, visits can be arranged and literature provided to encourage such groups to get involved.
- iv. Be recognised as an employer of choice for people from all communities ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

**Equality and Diversity Key Events and Dates** – MBC are currently reviewing their calendar of key dates which will include sports, health and equalities events under the overall heading of Wellbeing. Communications will be based on awareness raising and/or specific events to mark the key date. Information will be advertised to employees and the community to ensure Melton is recognised as a fair, inclusive, equal opportunity employer.

**Staff Survey** – the recent survey demonstrated that 66% of staff felt their line manager treated them fairly at work and 75% thought that the Council was an inclusive place to work.

**Equalities Training** – Equalities training is part of the induction process for new employees. HR and Communications are also looking at ‘certifications’ where people will be asked to repeat the online equalities training every three years.

**Performance Management** – At a strategic level, the management of the equalities agenda is the responsibility of the Equalities Steering Group (ESG). The membership of this group and terms of reference has recently been reviewed to reflect the structural changes within the authority. The group is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and met for the first time in May 2018.

**Other Activities:**

- The Council continues to play an active role in the Leicester Shire Equalities Forum
- The Council provided information about MBC's services for the recent Pride event in Leicester during September.

**4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 In order to ensure good corporate governance the Council is required by legislation to ensure that in the exercise of its functions, it has paid due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

4.2 The Council undertook a comprehensive refresh the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2015/16-2020. Equality is an integral and direct feature within the Council's eight corporate priorities, which are based around three core themes of: Place, People and Agile council, by promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and look to tackle issues in relation to discrimination and harassment. As a key policy document the One Council Corporate Plan provides a robust approach to supporting the single equalities scheme; ensuring that our vision, priorities and spending decisions are based on sound evidence, extensive engagement and a thorough understanding of community needs – helping to align the Council's focus and resources so we can encourage sustainable communities within a stronger, fairer and prosperous place.

**5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council's annual budget associated to resourcing for Equality and Diversity has been decreased to £4,000 from 2014/2015. Support is provided through an agreement with an Equality and Diversity specialist. However, additional duties can be purchased as required e.g. Members Equality and Diversity Training.

5.2 A new Single Equalities Scheme, Action Plan and set of Equality Objectives are required by March 2020 to cover another four year period from 2020 to 2024. There is the imminent need for extra resources & finances in order to initiate the project and consult effectively with the community from March 2019.

**6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 Failure to comply with the public sector equality duties could result in the Council facing a legal challenge and its reputation being damaged.

**7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no specific community safety aspects to this report apart from those covering equality objective iii.

**8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 Good practice requires that regular equality and diversity progress reports are provided for scrutiny against agreed objectives for the council.

**9.0 RISKS**

9.1 .

<b>L I K E L I H O O D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Very High</b>				
	<b>B</b>	<b>High</b>				
	<b>C</b>	<b>Significant</b>				
	<b>D</b>	<b>Low</b>				
	<b>E</b>	<b>Very Low</b>			1	
	<b>F</b>	<b>Almost Impossible</b>				
			<b>Negligible 1</b>	<b>Marginal 2</b>	<b>Critical 3</b>	<b>Catastrophic 4</b>

**IMPACT**

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>
1	Failure to comply resulting in legal challenge
2	
3	

**10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no specific climate change implications relating to this report.

**11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 There has been no direct consultation with officers of the council or the communities of the borough. The delivery of the equality and diversity agenda is driven by equality legislation.

## 12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 There will be a positive impact on all wards as a result of the delivery of the equality and diversity agenda.

Contact Officer        Aysha Rahman  
Date:                    17/10/2018  
Appendices :         None  
Background Papers:   None  
Reference :            X : Committees\?