

Summary of previous annual reports in achieving the schemes equality 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.

Borough Elections

In lead up to these elections, prospective Councillor Events are held and widely advertised in the local press to encourage all members of the community to get involved. The Council are trying to encourage people from disadvantaged groups to become more involved in local politics.

Engagement Toolkit

At Melton Borough Council we are focussed on ensuring that our community is engaged, consulted and involved in our decision-making process at as early a stage as possible. This is underpinned by our Engagement Toolkit, which is currently being revised (2019). The toolkit aims to support our Officers in prospering strong, active and inclusive communities, who can influence and shape decisions about the Borough in which they live and work.

A key principle of any engagement is that the activity is inclusive and non-discriminatory. The toolkit should act as a prompt to help officers remain conscious that engagement activities should be open and accessible to all relevant groups by offering a wide range of solutions and guidance to aid the decision-making process. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the appropriate methods of reaching all of the identified communities. This could mean considering more innovative and devolved methods of engagement. It is important that engagement is inclusive so that we find out the views of a representative proportion of the population.

Core Values

The Council aims 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.

The equalities web pages

The pages have been refreshed on a regular basis and are an important mechanism to ensure that we communicate effectively with the community about our priorities. Information on the website can also be requested in alternative formats.

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

Check & Challenge Group

The Check and Challenge group has been through a number of changes in its membership due to staff changes and the recent council restructure. The Terms of Reference were refreshed in 2018 and training has been provided to new members as they have joined. 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.

There has been a noticeable increase (over 200%) in Equality Impact Assessments in 2019 due to a big push at management team.

In 2016, the equality impact assessment template was updated and included revised wording to make it more user friendly. At the same time new sections were added to ensure more rigorous compliance with the equality duty. A step by step guide has also been produced to support any staff members who are undertaking an EIA.

In 2017 demographic data relating to the equalities profile of the Melton area (including some mid-term statistics) has been provided for staff. This was to ensure easy access to the data for officers undertaking an EIA and to provide consistency of approach.

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 and these include a declaration regarding conformity to the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act. This is a mandatory question asked as part of a tender (where a negative response would result in the elimination of a bidder from the tendering process) 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

Hate Crime

Incident reporting – Melton Borough Council (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.

- **National Hate Awareness Week**

This has taken place on four occasions during the life of the scheme and Melton Borough Council have organised many events during this period.

Other initiatives - some recent highlights include:

- Presentations on “Valuing the Difference” delivered on regular basis together with Leicestershire Police at various schools in the borough.
- Raising awareness about the differences between Anti Social Behaviour & Hate incidents at different residents’ meetings and patch walks with partners.
- 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”.
- 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

The council updated their calendar of key dates recently which include sports, health and equalities events under the overall heading of Wellbeing. Communications are 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.

Training

Online equalities training modules on a variety of equality themes were developed in 2017. This includes modules on Disability Discrimination; Equality in the Workplace; Dignity at Work and the Equality Act.

- Equalities training is part of the induction process for all new employees and elected members.
- Prevent training took place for Councillors and Officers 2016

Disability Confident

Melton Borough Council signed up to be a “Disability Confident” Employer in 2017 which superseded the former disability two tick status. The certificate is valid for two years so we recently updated our pledge and disability confident employer status in July this year. The Council is currently in the process of moving towards Disability Confident Leader status. This requires independent validation which is pending at the moment.

Staff Survey

The 2018 staff survey demonstrated that 75% of staff thought that the Council was an inclusive place to work