

FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES

2 DECEMBER 2021

Report of the Managing Executive Director

Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of the Council's draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 and to set out the proposed timetable for adoption by the Council.
- 1.2 To enable Members to consider and provide feedback on the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all councils to develop and publish their equality and diversity objectives and regularly report on progress. The Council's existing Equality and Diversity Strategy was put in place in 2018 and sets out the Council's key priorities for 2018-2021.

The Council Plan 2021-25 sets out the Council's ambitions in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion with the development of a new strategy to reduce discrimination and tackle inequalities being highlighted as a key deliverable to be in place by March 2022.

2.2 Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025

Over recent months work has been taking place to develop the Council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. A wide range of engagement has taken place with internal stakeholders which has involved reviewing the Council's approach and identifying the key challenges and opportunities for the Council and Derbyshire moving forward. The engagement has shown a real appetite for the Council to become more ambitious and to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything it does.

The draft Strategy recognises that the Council has worked hard on equality and diversity issues and that this work has resulted in significant changes to services, employment practices and approach. However, there is a recognition that more work needs to take place, particularly in the context of key demographic and economic challenges and wider societal events and issues including the coronavirus pandemic, Black Lives Matters, the increasing violence against women and girls and social mobility amongst many other issues.

The draft Strategy sets out the Council's vision and values for equality, diversity and inclusion and five key priorities to direct activity over the forthcoming three-year period as follows:

- Create a diverse and confident workforce
- Ensure fair access to employment, skills and business support
- Engaged communities able to influence decisions
- Healthy and supported people
- Safe and inclusive places for everyone

To focus the Council's effort and resource each priority sets out a key aim and outcome and identified areas of focus. Each of the priorities in the Strategy will be supported by a detailed action plan which will be refreshed on annual basis. The action plans will have indicators to measure progress against the priorities. Implementation will be overseen by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board and reporting will align with the Council's business monitoring processes.

The initial draft strategy has been circulated amongst those key internal stakeholders who have been involved in its development for early feedback. The draft Strategy has been generally well received with many colleagues expressing their support for the approach and overall direction of travel. A number of minor amendments have been suggested and these have been incorporated in the latest revised draft where appropriate.

A copy of the latest draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022- 2025 is now attached at Appendix A for consideration.

Public consultation on the draft Strategy will be carried out for a period of six weeks. Alongside the consultation there will also be a number of further opportunities for colleagues to contribute to the development of the strategy, action planning and associated workstreams as they develop over the coming weeks.

Proposed Timetable and Milestones

The following sets out the proposed timetable to enable the strategy to be in place and adopted by the Council by March 2022.

Activity	Responsibility	Timescale
Pre-decision consideration of Draft Strategy for public consultation by Improvement and Scrutiny - Resources Committee	I and S Committee - Resources	2 December 2021
Public consultation on draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Policy and Research	December 2021- Jan 2022
Workstreams to develop action plans to deliver the Strategy	Workstream Leads	October 2021 – January 2022
Final Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board	20 January 2022
Final Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to CMT	Policy & Research	25 January 2022
Final Draft Strategy to Improvement and Scrutiny - Resources Committee	I and S Committee - Resources	February 2021
Final Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to Cabinet	Policy & Research	10 March 2022
Adoption of Final Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy by Council	Policy and Research	23 March 2022
Implementation of Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board/ Workstream Leads	March 2022 onwards

3. Consultation

- 3.1 This report provides an opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025. The strategy will also be subject to a six week period of public consultation as set out in the report.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Retain the existing Equality and Diversity Strategy - this option is not recommended due to the significant changes and challenges emerging in society over the last four years.
- 4.2 Do not have a separate equality strategy and incorporate equality, diversity and inclusion activity in other Council strategies - this option is not recommended as it is not best practice and could lead to legal challenge.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 None identified.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - Implications.
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025

8. Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- a) Note the work that has taken place to develop the Council's draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 and the proposed timetable for adoption by the Council.
- b) Consider and provide feedback on the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 prior to Public Consultation

9. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 To ensure Members are aware of the and contributed to the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 and the activity that have been undertaken to reach its current state of development.
- 9.2 To seek views on the Council's draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022- 2025 at this point in time. Key to delivering this strategy will be aligning resources to deliver positive outcomes, as far as is practicable to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything the Council does.

Legal

- 2.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 supports the Council to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in the Equality Act 2010. The PSED is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The specific duty requires the Council to:
- Publish annual information to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This information must relate to people who are affected by the Council's policies and practices such as service users and employees
 - Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to our workforce processes, policies and practices, and is at the heart of the Council's People Strategy approved in July 2021 with our people ambition of becoming an employer of choice. The Council continues to make positive progress towards having a workforce that reflects its community and where inclusivity is embedded in our practice, with plans being developed aligned to the People Strategy to further strengthen our approaches.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None identified

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022- 2025 seeks to understand the issues and challenges faced by the people of Derbyshire in order to create a place of opportunity where everyone can

belong, addressing the needs and aspirations of all those who live and work in the county.

- 5.2 The strategy has been developed by gathering information from a range of impact and needs assessments and involving a range of internal and external stakeholders to identify key challenges and priorities and to confirm these.
- 5.3 Once the Strategy and Delivery Plan have been fully developed, an Equality Impact Analysis will be undertaken to ascertain the potential impact the Strategy and associated Delivery Plan will have on groups that share protected characteristics.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The development of the Council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy is a key deliverable set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025 to be completed by March 2022.