FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES

THURSDAY, 9 MAY 2024

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Change

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

1.   Purpose

1.1   To update Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - Resources on the key results and findings from the public consultation on the proposed EDI Statement and objectives, to update on the review of the strategic approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and to note the final draft EDI Statement and Equality Objectives

2.   Information and Analysis

2.1   At its meeting of 29 February 2024, the Committee noted the proposed revised strategic approach to EDI and draft equality objectives as a basis for public consultation and further internal engagement and agreed to receive a report on the final draft revised approach, EDI Statement and Equality objectives at its meeting of 9 May 2024.

2.2   Public consultation on the proposed draft EDI Statement and Equality Objectives took place between 28 February and 13 March 2024. Around 100 individual responses were received to the online consultation, which represents a significant increase on previous consultations on EDI strategies and policies.

2.3   There were high levels of agreement with the EDI statement and objectives with relatively low levels of disagreement as follows:

- **72%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the EDI statement.

- **13%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the EDI Statement

- **78%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 1.
- **4%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 1

- **74%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 2.
- **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 2

- **73%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 3.
- **11%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 3

- **76%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 4.
- **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 4

2.4 Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation and were able to select several options such as being a Derbyshire resident and employee. The highest single group responding were employees of the Council with 80% of respondents selecting this option.

2.5 Key results and findings from the public consultation are outlined at Appendix 2. Many respondents acknowledged that good progress on EDI issues has taken place and welcomed a stronger commitment to EDI. Several key themes and issues were identified in the consultation as follows:

- Respondents felt the language used could be simplified
- More detail was required on how the Council will deliver both its EDI Statement and proposed equality objectives.
- Respondents felt that the EDI statement needed to have a stronger emphasis on communities and customers as well as talking about the Council as an organisation.
- That the Council needs to give a bigger commitment to active listening and to involving communities in the design of policy and services
- Some respondents felt the Council needs to do more to develop participation by diverse communities and groups within decision-making, co-design and public life.
- Some respondents highlighted a need for a more visible commitment to change and taking action to deliver objectives and the sentiments of an EDI statement.
- Concerns were expressed by a number of respondents over the impact the budget will have on the Council's ability to take action, affect culture change and provide necessary services and support.

- There was agreement that leadership was an important element but also that EDI should everyone's responsibility.
- All areas of EDI need to be considered and addressed by the Council including race equality, disability socio-economic inequality and deprivation, intersectionality and where necessary taking targeted action to address specific areas of inequality or under-representation.
- Specific feedback from the BME Community Forum highlighted that the objectives set out in the consultation questionnaire are positive. However, the Forum feels that there must be an explicit reference to the engagement of different equality groups and the diverse BME communities. The Forum are keen to see a clear understanding of an explicit working relationship to define the connection between the DCC EDI Board and the Derbyshire BME Forum
- Feedback from both the BME Forum and Deaf-initely Women stressed the need to develop a countywide Equality Partnership representing different protected characteristics as a recognition of intersectionality.

2.7   Alongside the public consultation further internal stakeholder engagement has taken place with responses having a bigger focus on organisational culture, diversity, and inclusion, and ensuring that actions match any commitments being made, including in relation to employee opportunities and engagement.

Final Proposal

2.8   As a result of the feedback received from the consultation, it is proposed to amend the EDI Statement from:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Derbyshire means that all colleagues and our communities will have a voice, ensuring we listen and engage, shape and respond to enable an inclusive culture. As a result, our inclusive culture will enable improved delivery to our communities.

To the following (with changes highlighted in bold), which reflects the significant feedback that the EDI Statement should be more explicit about the Council's commitment to communities as well as the organisation.

*"Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Derbyshire **County Council** means that all colleagues and our communities will have a voice, ensuring we listen and engage, shape and respond to enable an inclusive culture. As a result, our inclusive culture will ensure **equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and service delivery leading to improved outcomes for our communities.***

2.9   Much of the feedback received, was around the need for specific, actionable commitments beyond the high-level statements of intent. As set out previously, each of the objectives will have several key areas of focus with specific annual implementation plans, along with associated outcomes. The EDI Statement and Equality Objectives are intended to reinforce that EDI should be part of our business as usual. The proposed Statement and Objectives set out at Appendix 3 provides the framework for the 'what' and the 'why' with the intent that delivery of EDI work is built, where appropriate, into service delivery.

2.10   In addition to the main areas of feedback set out above, a small number of typographical, clarification and grammatical changes have been made to the text relating to the key areas of focus. Where appropriate the term 'employee' has been amended to 'colleague' as feedback indicated respondents found this more inclusive in this context. Given the high levels of agreement with the Equality Objectives, it is not proposed to make any significant amendments to these.

Next steps

2.11   It is proposed to seek agreement to the approach and adoption of the equality objectives by Cabinet at its meeting of 13 June 2024. As outlined to this Committee on 29 February 2024, key to embedding EDI objectives and activity in the work of the Council will be to consider how the equality objectives are integrated into key Council strategies and plans. As a first step from April 2024, the Council will be developing the Council Plan for 2025-2029 and its organisational strategy, and consideration will be given to how EDI objectives are reflected as part of the Council's strategic vision, along with the further development and refinement of the strategic objectives and operating model. For 2024/25 EDI is a key element of the organisation's workforce strategic objective. Performance updates will also be captured as part of the reporting against strategic objective number 24 (*Develop and engage the council's workforce to enable the organisation to be an enterprising council*).

2.12   Consideration has been given to refreshing EDI governance to align with the new approach throughout 2024-25. It is proposed that the current EDI board is reframed and repurposed to provide senior leadership oversight in respect of the organisation's performance against its EDI statement and defined equality objectives, providing a connection between the Council's Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams to support integration of inclusion into the Council's business as usual service delivery, whilst also making connections with the strategic planning approach. Moving forward from 2025-26, the wider EDI governance approach will be

reviewed in readiness to align with the organisational strategy governance.

EDI Progress in 2023-24

2.13   Alongside the work to develop the revised strategic approach to EDI over the last year, several key areas of EDI activity have been undertaken. Much of the activity undertaken has not only positioned the Council in respect of progressing the new approach but has also continued to provide a robust basis for the Council in respect of its work around budget saving activity and wider transformation of the Council. Key activity undertaken includes:

- Establishing a cross part working group of Elected Members to consider how the Council, members and political parties might encourage broader participation in public life with recommendations from the group considered by the Council's Cabinet on 14 March 2024.
- Completing a range of face-to-face consultation sessions with young people, disabled people and the BME Community Forum to broaden and ensure a diverse voice within consultation for the Council's Budget for 2024/25.
- Completing further Equality Impact Analysis in relation to a number of key services which also included significant public and stakeholder consultation.
- Developing additional advice and support for colleagues to help support a comprehensive set of EIAs in relation to the Council's budget and budget proposals for 2024/25. This has been made available and promoted on the Our Derbyshire intranet pages and replaces initial plans to create a portal using other platforms.
- Developing updated profiles for each Electoral Division of the Council that includes more EDI profile information and areas profiles so that people can see the differences in diversity across geographical areas of the county, helping s in understanding Derbyshire's local communities better.
- Developing a workforce equality dashboard detailing gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age and disability.
- Developing recruitment data detailing ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion & disability of candidates at each of the key stages of the recruitment process (application, shortlisted for interview, offer accepted, contract returned).
- Developed EDI data in detailing gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age and disability of employees in formal HR processes – disciplinary, absence management, performance capability, bullying & harassment and grievance.

- Continuing to listen and engage with employees through our employee survey, shaping and responding to improve employee engagement
- Relaunching the Council's five employee networks in 2023 to further improve engagement and support co-production: BME, Pride, Dis-Ability Inclusion, Neurodiversity, Women's. Surveyed workforce on their views of employee networks.
- Launching mandatory EDI training for all employees.
- Undertaking an EDI awareness programme of ongoing events, sponsored by Corporate Management Team, following monthly discussion at Corporate Management Team meeting.
- Launching the 'Inspiring Leaders' development programme for all line managers, which includes unconscious bias, delegating inclusively, challenging unacceptable behaviour and coaching.
- Reviewing the use and need of translation and interpretation services.

3. Consultation

3.1 As outlined in the report a period of public consultation along with further internal and external stakeholder engagement has been undertaken.

4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The Council could decide not to refresh the strategic approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and continue with the existing strategy. However, this is not recommended as it is timely to reflect EDI objectives as part of the development of the Council Plan 2025-2029 along with the organisation's strategic vision, the further development and refinement of the strategic objectives and operating model.

5. Implications

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

6. Background Papers

6.1 None

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications
7.2 Appendix 2 – Public consultation results and findings

7.3   Appendix 3 – Final Proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
       Statement and Objectives

8.   Recommendation(s)

That Committee:

1. Note the key results and findings of the public consultation on the EDI
    Statement and Equality Objectives as set out in Appendix 2.

2. Note the final proposed EDI Statement and Equality Objectives as set
    out at Appendix 3 as a basis for seeking Cabinet approval.

3. Note the update on key EDI activity across the Council undertaken in
    2023-24 as set out in the report above.

9.   Reasons for Recommendation(s)

9.1 Elected Members play a key role in helping the Council to meet the public
    sector equality general duties through decision-making, the setting of
    policy and priorities for the Council, and as local representatives within
    their respective communities and leaders for those communities.

Jen Skila
Director of People and Organisational Change

Implications

Financial

1.1   None identified.

Legal

2.1   The Public sector equality duty came in to force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and public authorities are required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities to publish:
- equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6th April 2012)
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty (from 31st January 2012)
- The proposed strategic approach will support compliance with the above requirements.

Human Resources

3.1   Further work continues to support the organisation's ambitions outlined in the People Strategy in relation to EDI.

Information Technology

4.1   None identified.

Equalities Impact

5.1   The Council would be failing to meet specific duties under the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010 if it did not adopt appropriate equality objectives and on at least an annual basis publish equalities information, including progress against its objectives.

5.2   The strategic approach as set out will help lead work to address inequality across Derbyshire, advance equality of opportunity and support activity which promotes good relations between people from different backgrounds. This will extend to employment, service delivery, and the Council's public functions.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1   Strong links are already made between the EDI Strategy and the Council Plan and Department based Service Plans. The proposed strategic approach to EDI offers a real opportunity of translating organisational improvement and addressing inequalities within these key corporate plans.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1   None identified.

Key results and findings from the Public Consultation on proposed EDI Statement and Equality Objectives

Introduction

Public consultation took place on the Council's draft EDI Statement and four Equality Objectives between Wednesday 28th February to 13 March 2024.

This was done via an online survey on the Have Your Say pages and via colleagues who promoted taking part with a number of groups from diverse backgrounds, including the BME Community Forum, youth groups, and area Learning Disability groups,

In total, 101 people completed the online survey, which is a significant increase from past consultations on EDI policies or strategies.

Survey respondents
Respondents to the consultation were grouped by their relationship to the Council. Some indicated several relationships such as resident and employee, for example. The highest single group were employees of the Council.

Type of respondent	Number of respondents
Derbyshire Resident	47
Derbyshire Business Owner	2
Works in Derbyshire	35
Studying in Derbyshire	3
DCC Employee	80
Representative of local group/org	3
Other	0
Total	**170**

Participation by diversity
- 91.9% of respondents were aged 25 to 64.
- Those aged 45 to 64 (60.5%) were overrepresented and the younger and older age groups underrepresented.
- 89% of respondents said they were straight/heterosexual. With 7% identifying as Gay/Lesbian, and 5% Bisexual.
- 8.9% of respondents were from BME communities, marginally higher than BME representation in communities and the workforce
- 85% of respondents identified as female at birth with males underrepresented.
- 34.7% of respondents stated they had a disability of some form.

Key Findings

Overall, respondents agreed with the Council's proposed EDI statement and objectives. Many respondents however also felt that more work should be done to develop the statement and the Council needs to identify how it will deliver on its commitment and objectives.

- **72.4%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the EDI statement.
- **%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the EDI Statement

- **78%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 1.
- **3.5%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 1

- **74.4%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 2.
- **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 2

- **73%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 3.
- **10.5%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 3

- **75.6%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with Objective 4.
- **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with Objective 4

EDI Statement

Key themes

Based on the feedback provided, several key themes emerged regarding the current statement on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at Derbyshire County Council (DCC):

Clarity and Conciseness: Respondents said the current statement is vague, jargonistic, and lacks clarity. They suggest simplifying language and making the statement more accessible to all audiences, whether internal or external.

Inclusivity: There's a strong emphasis on ensuring that the statement reflects the needs and voices of all individuals, including hidden communities and those whose voices may not traditionally be heard.

Actionable Commitments: Feedback indicates a desire for the statement to include specific, actionable commitments rather than generalisations. This includes proactive measures to promote equality, reduce division and discrimination, and actively engage with communities.

Community-Centric Approach: Many respondents highlight the importance of centring the statement around the broader Derbyshire community, rather than solely focusing on the council itself.

Continuous Improvement: There's a recognition that while progress has been made in embedding EDI, there is still room for improvement.

Active Listening and Engagement: Feedback highlighted the importance of actively listening to and engaging with individuals and communities to understand their needs, concerns, and perspectives.

Empowerment and Representation: The statement should reflect a commitment to empowering all members of the community and ensuring their representation in decision-making processes.

Respondents suggested amendments/ changes/ ideas

Some respondents suggested areas where the statement could be improved further including:

Inclusivity: The language used should reflect inclusivity and avoid sounding disingenuous or top-down.

Proactivity and Concrete Actions: Many respondents expressed a need for the Council to be more proactive and action oriented. They suggested including specific commitments, such as training programs, mentorship initiatives, and creating safe spaces for dialogue and feedback.

Accessibility and Understanding: It is important that the statement is written in plain English, is easily understandable by all residents of Derbyshire, whilst demonstrating an understanding of the barriers faced by different sectors of the community.

Listening and Engagement: The statement should emphasize the importance of listening to and engaging with the community, as well as acting on feedback received. This includes co-production and ensuring that all voices are heard.

Wellbeing and Representation: The importance of prioritising the wellbeing of the workforce and ensuring representation at all levels was emphasised.

Clarification and Specificity: Respondents highlighted the need for clarity and specificity in the statement, including clear goals, targets, and timelines for achieving EDI objectives.

Addressing Concerns and Language Sensitivity: Some respondents raised concerns about the language used and possible areas of conflict particularly around gender identity.

Objective 1

Objective 1: Understand our diverse communities and use that understanding to shape organisational policy and practice

We will do this by:

- Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and delivery and how we manage outcomes and impact on residents.
- Improving how we collect and use information to tell us more about our communities.
- Assessing how our decisions affect different communities, particularly those with poorer life outcomes.
- Working alongside people from all our diverse communities to create services and encourage wider participation in public life.

78% agreed or strongly agreed with objective 1. With only 3.5% disagreeing or strongly disagree.

Key themes

Many respondents called for a stronger commitment to taking action to address inequality and using assessments such as EIAs to drive change, including when proposals will impact adversely.

Respondents also felt that there should be deeper engagement with diverse communities to better understand their needs and challenges. Engagement should lead to meaningful changes in policies and practices, ensuring that community voices directly influence decision-making.

Collaboration with diverse communities is seen as essential for gaining insights, addressing blind spots, and improving service delivery. Building trust through transparency and acknowledgment of the issues impacting different sectors of the community is highlighted as necessary.

Feedback also suggests the need to improve the accessibility and promotion of services, especially for vulnerable individuals and their caregivers. The importance of equity and social justice was also emphasised, with a focus on addressing disparities and promoting inclusivity through tailored services and decision-making processes.

Respondents emphasised the need for better representation, particularly of minority groups such as autistic individuals, in decision-making roles within the organization.

Overall respondents believe that EDI principles should be integrated into service delivery and decision-making processes. Tools for consultation, impact analysis, and community understanding should be embraced genuinely.

Respondents suggested amendments/ changes/ ideas
Many suggested amendments such as clarifying that services are intended for everyone, including those without a voice such as children, individuals with severe disabilities, and enduring mental health issues.

Respondents felt that the Council should ensure everyone is involved in the shaping of organisational policy and practice to promote inclusion at all levels.

Respondents also identified the need to expand engagement methods beyond surveys and questionnaires to include in-person meetings, phone calls, and other forms of direct interaction.

The Council should also look at ways to enhance inclusivity through initiatives such as providing accessibility initiatives, language support, cultural training, and community outreach.

Proposed Revised Objective 1
Objective 1: Understand *all* our diverse communities and use that understanding to shape organisational policy and practice
We will do this by:
- Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and delivery and how we manage outcomes and impact on residents.

- Improving how we collect and use information to tell us more about **all** our **diverse** communities.
- Assessing how our decisions affect different communities and **how we can reduce inequalities in outcomes.**
- Working alongside people from all our diverse communities to create services and encourage wider participation in public life.

Objective 2

Objective 2: Lead by example on equality, diversity and inclusion
We will do this by:
- Increasing EDI understanding and confidence amongst all leaders and Elected Members, to further enhance our inclusive culture
- Working with our partners and key stakeholders to understand EDI best practice, share our experiences.
- and generate opportunities for local people and help address inequalities.

74.4% agreed or strongly agreed with objective 2. With only 6% disagreeing or strongly disagree.

Key themes
Many respondents emphasised the importance of senior leadership demonstrating commitment to inclusivity through their actions, not just words. This involves actively championing diversity initiatives, participating in relevant training, engaging with diverse communities, and ensuring accountability and transparency in progress towards inclusivity goals. Respondents included councillors in this.
However, it was also noted that it is important for all colleagues to be involved in promoting inclusive practices and understanding the needs of the communities they serve.
There's a consensus that representation in leadership positions should reflect the diversity of the community served. Translating into actively recruiting and supporting individuals from underrepresented backgrounds for leadership roles and community-facing positions. This aspect of diversity work seems to be absent from the proposals for action to deliver the objective currently.
Those taking part expressed a desire for concrete actions rather than just high level statements of intent. They advocate for identifying priority groups, addressing specific inequalities, and implementing clear plans to extend opportunities to those who currently lack them.
While some respondents see the progress that has been made as a good start, others stress the need to go further and ensure that inclusivity is woven into every aspect of organisational culture and practices.

Respondents suggested amendments/ changes/ ideas
Based on the feedback provided, there are several areas where improvements can be made to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within an organisation or community.

Respondents believe that there should be increased understanding and advocacy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Council leadership and by Elected Members. This included attendance at mandatory training and engagement with communities of interest to enhance their knowledge, understanding, and confidence in addressing EDI issues. Some advocated establishing designated champions for various minority groups (e.g., disability, LGBTQ+, neurodiversity) among Elected Members to openly support and advocate for marginalised communities.

Many comments relate to the need for improved collaboration with partners and stakeholders to identify and implement EDI best practices, actively seeking out diverse stakeholders to ensure representation and inclusion in decision-making processes. There was support for implementing measures to support individuals who may not be able to express their views or needs directly, such as young people or those with communication challenges.

Respondents also believe the Council should help to remove barriers for local communities to voice their ideas and concerns regarding inequalities, fostering a culture of openness and inclusion.

The Council should also pro-actively work to challenge unfair or negative workplace culture and promote greater organisational and personal accountability. Some wanted to see regular reviews of workplace policies, procedures, and practices through an EDI lens to ensure they do not inadvertently disadvantage any group, whilst also provide training for managers on recognising and accommodating hidden disabilities and fostering an inclusive environment for all employees.

Proposed Revised Objective 2
Objective 2: Lead by example on equality, diversity and inclusion
We will do this by:
- Increasing EDI understanding and confidence amongst all leaders and Elected Members, to further enhance our inclusive culture
- Working with our partners and key stakeholders to understand EDI best practice
- **Sharing our experiences of best practice in EDI.**
- Generate opportunities for local people and help address inequalities.

Objective 3

Objective 3: Create a working environment that is inclusive where all colleagues feel that they belong and can be their best at work
We will do this by:
- Sharing our stories and learning to understand and accept our differences
- Making our workplaces more accessible and welcoming
- Enabling our employee networks to support the employees they represent
- Demonstrating our commitment to externally recognised standards such as Level 3 Disability Confident Employer

73% agreed or strongly agreed with objective 3. With only 10.5% disagreeing or strongly disagree.

Key themes

Based on the provided feedback, several key themes emerge regarding the need for inclusivity and support within Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and in relation to activity to generate employment opportunities.

Respondents strongly related to EDI as a workplace issue, and highlighted County Hall as a venue that needs to be more welcoming, inclusive and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities or specific needs. This includes physical accessibility, such as ramps and lifts, as well as accommodations like accessible software, but it also covered how people feel when at this venue working.

There's a call for tailored support for various needs, including those related to physical disabilities, neurodiversity, mental health, and minority backgrounds. This involves not just policies but practical implementations, such as providing necessary equipment and resources.

Training and awareness sessions are seen as essential to increase understanding and reduce stigma around diverse needs and conditions, including neurodiversity and disabilities.

There's a recognition that inclusivity is an ongoing process that requires continuous evaluation and improvement of policies and practices based on feedback and evolving understanding. Respondents value being heard and being involved in decision-making processes however, there are concerns about under-representation and the need to ensure fair opportunities for all individuals, regardless of protected characteristics does not feature in the objective as is.

Respondents suggested amendments/ changes/ ideas

Several respondents identified the need for improved training for managers regarding reasonable adjustments and supporting colleagues. As well as training on understanding and actively challenging racism and other forms of discrimination. Providing clear policies and workflows for seeking support for employees.

Respondents want to see representation at all levels across all areas of work within the Council. Whilst those working for the Council welcomed expanded communication in relation to EDI, they highlighted some gaps in relation to accessibility, including the tone of some types of communication currently being delivered.

Given the high proportion of respondents who indicate they work for the Council, it is not surprising that many respondents chose to focus on workforce, culture and engagement inside the authority and were able to describe actions they believe the Council should consider, such as creating clear policies and practices for training, development, and promotion within the Council.

Proposed Revised Objective 3
Objective 3: Create a working environment that is inclusive where all colleagues feel that they belong and can be their best at work
We will do this by:
- Sharing our stories and learning to understand and **celebrate** our differences
- Making our **physical and virtual workplaces** more accessible and welcoming
- Enabling our employee networks to support the **colleagues** they represent
- Demonstrating our commitment to externally recognised standards such as Level 3 Disability Confident Employer

Objective 4

Objective 4: Design, provide and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people of Derbyshire and reflect our organisational culture.
We will do this by:
- Developing more equal partnerships between people who use services, providers, carers and employees to deliver better outcomes

Removing barriers preventing access to services and information
75.6% agreed or strongly agreed with objective 4. With only 6% disagreeing or strongly disagree.

Key themes
Based on the provided comments, there is a strong emphasis on the need for clearer, more specific language and actions regarding the removal of barriers and ensuring accessibility, particularly in the context of organisational culture and service provision.

Respondents want to see concrete steps being taken by the Council, rather than general statements. This includes commitments to specific actions such as improving physical accessibility, providing training, engaging with the community, and leveraging technology.

There is strong support for involving the community, service users, and carers in the design and delivery of services to ensure that services are responsive to the diverse needs of the community and foster a sense of ownership and empowerment among stakeholders.

There is a need to ensure that services are equitable and inclusive, addressing the needs of all residents, including those from marginalised or underrepresented groups. This involves not only removing physical barriers but also addressing communication barriers, cultural competency, and accessibility of information.

In summary, to address the concerns raised and improve organisational culture and service provision, it is essential to focus on clear, specific actions that prioritise community engagement, equity, inclusivity, and transparency. This requires a commitment to ongoing evaluation, learning, and adaptation to ensure that services are responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

Ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of all initiatives.

Respondents suggested amendments/ changes/ ideas
From the themes emerging from the survey respondents wanted a focus on ensuring equality, inclusivity, and accessibility within the services provided by the Council and emphasis on equality and inclusivity not being merely aspirational but fundamental values that guide all aspects of service delivery and organisational culture.

Many respondents felt that instead of vague statements about reflecting organisational culture or aspirations, the Council should articulate specific actions and strategies for removing barriers to access and ensuring inclusivity. Respondents highlight the importance of collaborating with external partners, community organisations, and advocacy groups to address systemic issues and ensure that services are designed and delivered in a way that meets the diverse needs of the community.
Feedback again recognised the challenges faced by those who may be unable to voice their opinions or advocate for themselves, such as young people or individuals with disabilities. That the Council should ensure that mechanisms are in place to empower and amplify the voices of these groups in decision-making processes.
Respondents also felt that there should be greater commitment to regular communication and transparency regarding the organisation's progress and challenges in advancing EDI goals. This includes sharing successes, addressing shortcomings, and soliciting feedback from both internal stakeholders and the broader community.

Proposed Revised Objective 4
Objective 4: Design, provide and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people of Derbyshire and reflect our organisational culture.
We will do this by:
- Developing more equal partnerships between people who use services, providers, carers and **colleagues** to deliver better outcomes
- Removing barriers preventing access to services and information

FINAL PROPOSED EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) STATEMENT AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Derbyshire County Council means that all colleagues and our communities will have a voice, ensuring we listen and engage, shape and respond to enable an inclusive culture. As a result, our inclusive culture will ensure equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and service delivery leading to improved outcomes for our communities.

Objective 1: Understand all our diverse communities and use that understanding to shape organisational policy and practice
We will do this by:
- Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and delivery and how we manage outcomes and impact on residents.
- Improving how we collect and use information to tell us more about all our diverse communities.
- Assessing how our decisions affect different communities and how we can reduce inequalities in outcomes.
- Working alongside people from all our diverse communities to create services and encourage wider participation in public life.

Objective 2: Lead by example on equality, diversity and inclusion
We will do this by:
- Increasing EDI understanding and confidence amongst all leaders and Elected Members, to further enhance our inclusive culture
- Working with our partners and key stakeholders to understand EDI best practice
- Sharing our experiences of best practice in EDI.
- Generate opportunities for local people and help address inequalities.

Objective 3: Create a working environment that is inclusive where all colleagues feel that they belong and can be their best at work
We will do this by:
- Sharing our stories and learning to understand and celebrate our differences
- Making our physical and virtual workplaces more accessible and welcoming
- Enabling our employee networks to support the colleagues they represent
- Demonstrating our commitment to externally recognised standards such as Level 3 Disability Confident Employer

Objective 4: Design, provide and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people of Derbyshire and reflect our organisational culture.
We will do this by:

- Developing more equal partnerships between people who use services, providers, carers and colleagues to deliver better outcomes
- Removing barriers preventing access to services and information