

REPORT TO: STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE: 1ST JULY 2019

TOPIC: EQUALITY STRATEGY 2019-2023

REPORT BY: SENIOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 North Devon Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity both as an employer of people and as a provider of services.
- 1.2 Previously North Devon Council produced a joint Plan with Torridge District Council for 2011-2015.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Recommended that the Equality Strategy for 2019-2023 be adopted.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council has an up-to-date Strategy in place to meet its duty under the Equality Act 2010.

4 REPORT

- 4.1 As an employer and deliverer of services, North Devon Council is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and fostering good relations between people from all communities.
- 4.2 The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 and legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act.
- 4.3 The Act covers nine protected characteristics and these are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Every person has one or more of these protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

- 4.4 As part of the Act, public authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty (“the equality duty”). This duty replaced the previous race, disability and gender equality duties and was developed to extend across all the protected characteristics. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties and requires public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Act.
- 4.5 Public authorities must publish information to show their compliance with the equality duty as part of the decision making process. The information published must have due regard to the need to:
- 4.5.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - 4.5.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - 4.5.3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 4.5.4 Publish equality information at least once a year to show how they’ve complied with the equality duty.
 - 4.5.5 Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.
- 4.6 A revised Equality Strategy is attached as Appendix A to the report. The publication of the Equality Strategy will support the Council in meeting the general and specific duties as part of the Act.
- 4.7 The strategy outlines the Council’s equality objectives and how the Council will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations and what we will do to make North Devon a place where people get along with each other and treat each other with dignity and respect.
- 4.8 Public consultation has been undertaken on the draft strategy between 29th April 2019 and 10th June 2019. Four consultation responses have been received and are detailed in Appendix B to the report. The consultation responses will be published on the Council’s website. The Council provides grant funding to a variety of organisations including Go North Devon.
- 4.9 Training on the new Strategy will be provided to all Councillors on 17th September 2019 which attendance at is mandatory. Training will also be provided for all staff (dates to be confirmed).
- 4.10 As part of the decision making process, report authors will be required to confirm whether any equalities implications are anticipated as a result of their report and if so will be required to complete an Equality Impact Assessment Summary form available which will be published on the Council’s website.
- 4.11 An action plan which be published on an annual basis demonstrating the Council’s compliance with the equality duty.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Accommodated within existing staff resources.

6 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Article or Appendix and paragraph	Referred or delegated power?
Part 3 Annexe 1 Paragraph 1	Delegated

7 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

7.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Equality Act 2010
- Joint Inclusive Equality Scheme Action Plan 2012-2015
- Consultation responses

The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

9 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

9.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers.

Author: Bev Triggs Date: 11th June 2019
Reference: \\w2knddc.ad\data\CivicCentre\Units\Corp
Comm\Democratic\Committee\Reports\Strategy and Resources\2019.07.01\2019.07.01
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