

Eden District Council

Cabinet

22 February 2022

**Equality Objectives 2021-2025 under the
Equality Act 2010**

Portfolio:	Leader
Report from:	Interim Director of Resources
Wards:	All Wards
OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Every four years Public Bodies are required to set Equality Objectives that outline how they plan to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Setting four yearly objectives gives the Council an opportunity to show its commitment to Equality/Equity and the approach it plans to take. Outlined in this report is a set of updated objectives.
- 1.2 The adoption of the new objectives will form part of a wider piece of work being undertaken by the Council to improve its Equality, Equity and Diversity practices and understanding.
- 1.3 We recognise that as a Council we have a lot of work to do in this area, and the adoption of the new objectives is a starting point to ensure the Council is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed updated Equality/Equity Objectives are adopted by the Council and published on the Council's website.

3 Report Details

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 contains the Public Sector Equality Duty, the aim of which is to support good decision making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient, effective and accessible to all, meeting different people's needs.
- 3.2 The Equality Duty stipulates that the Council is to set and publish Equality Objectives at least every four years. The currently, adopted objectives were created in 2012 and therefore expired in 2016. The following new objectives are proposed to replace them;
 - **Improve the Council's Equality and Impact (EIA) process. This will help to improve the collection of data to achieve better outcomes**

- **Ensure Staff and Members are kept informed about the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and specific duties, through updated training**
 - **Ensure staff and Members have clear information about Eden's diversity profiles, through the provision of annual updates of equality information**
- 3.3 The Corporate Plan 2019-2023 sets out the Council's vision for Eden; *For Eden to be a place where people act together to meet the needs of all and ensure the wellbeing of future generations*. In order to achieve this vision, the Council identified 4 Corporate Priorities; Sustainable, Connected, Creative and Healthy, Safe and Secure.
- 3.4 In order to work effectively towards the 'Connected' priority, the Council recognised Equality/Equity and Diversity as a key area of focus. This initiated the task of conducting an internal review of the Council's current internal practices. The findings of this internal review, identified the requirement to update the current Equality Objectives.
- 3.5 The Council can use its Equality/Equity Objectives to ensure there is an Organisational understanding of Equality, Equity and Diversity and embed Equality/Equity across strategic partnerships, initiatives and policies. The Objectives will serve as a framework for ensuring Equality and Equity underpins the way the Council works.
- 3.6 The proposed Equality/Equity Objectives have been identified as they enable continuous improvement, both of understanding and working practices.
- 3.7 Training for staff and Members is already planned, and will be delivered by an external agency. We also recognise the need for us to be more outward looking as an organisation so we will look to work with member organisations of the Cumbria REN (Cumbria Race Equity Network) as part of our continuous improvement.
- 3.8 If the Equality/Equity Objectives are not updated, the Council is at risk of enforcement action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Additionally, there is also a risk that if they are not updated the Council will not pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Officers and Members will not have the understanding of how to work in line with its stipulations.
- 3.9 An associated Action Plan has been developed (see appendix A) covering the period 2022-2023 in support of the recommended Equality/Equity Objectives outlined in this report. This Action Plan has been created with regard to LGR and the corresponding impact on Council Resource.

4 Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Agreement of the updated Equality/ Objectives will have the following benefits;
- The adoption of updated Equality/Equity Objectives means the Council is demonstrating its commitment to Equality, Equity and Diversity, and to the Public Sector Equality Duty

- The Council is committed to improving the Equality Impact Assessment process and ensure future policies, decisions and strategies will have consideration of Equality/Equity issues
- Ensure there is a shared understanding of Eden's diversity profiles across the whole Organisation

5 Policy Framework

5.1 The Council has four corporate priorities which are:

- Sustainable;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Connected; and
- Creative

5.2 This report meets the all of the corporate priorities, but particularly 'Connected.' In order to work effectively in line with this Priority, Equality was identified as an area of focus. The adoption of new Equality Objectives has been acknowledged as a key factor of this work.

6 Consultation

6.1 The proposed Equality Objectives have been circulated amongst the Equality Officers at the neighbouring Authorities;

- Cumbria County Council
- Carlisle City Council
- South Lakeland District Council
- Barrow Borough Council
- Allerdale Council
- Copeland Council

6.2 The suggested objectives were circulated to the above Councils via the Local Authority Equality Officers Network on the 6 October 2021. Constructive feedback was received and the Objectives have acknowledged the comments and were amended accordingly.

6.3 The draft Equality/Equity Objectives were also shared with the Leader of the Council following the Consultation with the above authorities.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial and Resources

7.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council's stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2019-2023 as agreed at Council on 7 November 2019.

7.1.2 There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources as funding for the updated training has already been allocated from the Central Training budget held with Human Resources.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 If the Council does not update its Equality Objectives the Council is at risk of enforcement action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

7.3 Human Resources

7.3.1 There are no proposals in this report that would impact on Human Resources.

7.4 Environmental

7.4.1 This proposal has no environmental implications. There are no significant effects on carbon emissions and ecosystems as a result of adopting new Equality/Equity Objectives.

7.5 Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	The adoption of new Equality/Equity Objectives has a positive impact on the consideration of and delivery of positive outcomes in terms of Equality, Equity and Diversity
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	The adoption of new Equality/Equity Objectives has a positive impact on the consideration of and delivery of positive outcomes in terms of Health, Social, Environmental and Economic Impact.
Crime and Disorder	The adoption of new Equality/Equity Objectives has a positive impact on the consideration of and delivery of positive outcomes in terms of Crime and Disorder.
Children and Safeguarding	The adoption of new Equality/Equity Objectives has a positive impact on the consideration of and delivery of positive outcomes in terms of Children and Safeguarding.

7.6 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Council not operating with due regard of Public Sector Equality Duty	Potential enforcement action by Human Rights Commission Detrimental consequences to Council's reputation	Updated Equality/Equity Objectives have been established for review

8 Other Options Considered

8.1 An alternative option is to not update the current Equality Objectives, but this means we would not be working in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

9 Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended the proposed Equality/Equity Objectives included in this report are adopted, for the reasons cited in Section 4.

Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	9/2/22 (deputy)
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	10/02/2022
Relevant Assistant Director	26/01/22

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix A - EDC Equality Action Plan 2022-2023

Contact Officer: Megan Pryor, Principal Officer Business Intelligence

Link to Corporate Plan Priority (2021-2022):	Connected- Equality and Diversity: To carry out a review of our current internal practices and develop staff training with outside Consultants
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Equality Objective 1: Improve the Council’s Equality and Impact (EIA) process. This will help to improve the collection of data to achieve better outcomes				
Associated Actions	Responsibility	Action/ Review By (Date)	Resource Implications	Monitoring/ Progress/ Outcome
1.1 Research examples of best practice EIA process and templates amongst other Local, Cumbrian Authorities	Communities Officer/ Business Intelligence Officer	By end of February 2022	Officer Time	Work commenced 2021 and review of other Local Authority EIA process and templates already in process via attendance on Equality Officer’s Network Group
1.2. Revise current EIA template based on current findings of best practice research if required	Communities Officer/ Business Intelligence Officer	By end of April 2022	Officer Time	
1.3 Create an Equality and Diversity area on SharePoint for easy access to EIA Templates, guidance and information	Communities Officer/ Business Intelligence Officer	By end of January 2022	Officer Time	Dedicated SharePoint area already in creation
1.4 Ensure completed EIA’s are saved in a central, accessible area (SharePoint site referred to in point 1.2)	Communities Officer/ Business Intelligence Officer	Ongoing	Officer Time	

Equality Objective 2: Ensure Staff and Members are kept informed about the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and specific duties, through updated training				
Associated Actions	Responsibility	Action/ Review By (Date)	Resource Implications	Monitoring/ Progress/ Outcome
2.1 Organise up to date Equality Training for both Staff and Elected Members	Communities Officer	By end of March 2022	Cost of Training and Officer Time	Budget agreed to cover the cost of the training External training provider (IODA) identified
2.2 Update Equality and Diversity webpage with updated Equality Objectives	Communities Officer / Business Intelligence Officer	By end of April 2022	Officer Time	
2.3 Ensure dedicated SharePoint area is updated regularly with information regarding Equality Duty	Communities Officer / Business Intelligence Officer	Ongoing	Officer Time	
Equality Objective 3: Ensure staff and Members have clear information about Eden’s diversity profiles, through the provision of annual updates of equality information				
Associated Actions	Responsibility	Action/ Review By (Date)	Resource Implications	Monitoring/ Progress/ Outcome
3.1 Publish Eden’s Equality profile on Equality and Diversity section of EDC website and update where necessary on an annual basis	Communities Officer / Business Intelligence Officer	By end of April 2022 / Review annually	Officer Time	
3.2 When the Equality information is updated share regularly with all staff and Members via SharePoint Bulletin Board	Communities Officer / Business Intelligence Officer	Ongoing	Officer Time	