

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

11 January 2022

Chichester District Council Equality Strategy 2022-26

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Council be recommended to adopt the Chichester District Council Equality Strategy 2022-26 (including the Council's equality objectives).

3. Background

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 place a duty on the Council as a public authority to prepare and publish at least one equality objective every 4 years that we believe will help us meet our duties under the Equality Act. Further detail about the Equality Act 2010 and the duties it places on public authorities is contained within the Draft Strategy.

3.2 The Council's current Equalities Strategy 2017-21 is due for replacement. An updated Strategy has been drafted following research into best practice and review of Strategies in place at other Local Authorities. Current thinking about equalities issues nationally and locally has been considered and included where a relevant update was needed. The Strategy also includes an appendix giving a detailed community profile based on the latest local data and statistics.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

4.1 A new Equality Strategy is adopted and published on our website, in compliance with our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

5. Proposal

5.1 As in previous versions of the Equality Strategy, this new draft contains a set of broad, strategic objectives based around the key themes of: Data, Employment and Staff, Service Delivery, Community Cohesion and Involvement and Equality and the Rural Area.

5.2 Key changes from the Council's previous Equality Strategy are:

- **Digital Inclusion** – Covers the recent work done to improve the accessibility of our online services to allow more people to ‘self-serve’, but makes the point that support is always available for those who need it and that online access and proficiency are not a requirement of accessing our services.
- **Protected Characteristics** - Additional, informal protected characteristics are added (socio-economic and geographic inequality and the needs of carers), committing us to consider them where they are relevant.
- **Data** – Reference to our use of external data sources is strengthened. Services are encouraged to look at what data they already have access to (either published data sets or collected from customers as part of application or enquiry forms) before asking customers for additional information.
- **Service Delivery** – A commitment to ensuring our partners, contractors and suppliers also comply with relevant statutes is now included. The Strategy states that the Council will take account of any emerging equality issues we may need or choose to make commitments on during the life of the Strategy.
- **Community Cohesion and Inclusion** – New, community focussed objective, which addresses explicitly the duty placed on us by the Act to foster good relations. Support for victims of discrimination is included in this objective, along with inclusive engagement.

5.3 If approved, Services will need to incorporate the published equality objectives into their annual Service Planning process and consider how their work can help the Council to meet them. Equality Impact Assessments are still encouraged to document analysis of the likely impact of any policy, procedure, initiatives or projects on those with protected characteristics.

5.4 The Strategy’s objectives will also be used to inform our Annual Report on Equalities, which we are also obliged to publish under the Equality Act, to detail our progress over the preceding year towards achieving our equality objectives.

6. **Alternatives that have been considered**

6.1 The Strategy is due for replacement and publication of Equality Objectives is a requirement, therefore, no alternatives have been explored.

7. **Resource and Legal Implications**

7.1 The Strategy replaces an existing one, so no additional resource is required. Publication of the Strategy is in accordance with our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

8. **Consultation**

8.1 Comments were invited from all Divisional Managers and some identified key Service Managers. In particular, the Draft Strategy has been reviewed by the DM for Legal and Democratic Services and the HR Manager, with feedback received from both and incorporated into the current Draft.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 The Strategy is intended to have a positive impact on the Community. The published objectives outline our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and, in particular, that anyone who needs to or wishes to is able to engage with Council services.
- 9.2 There is a risk attached to failing to comply with our duties under the Equality Act, which timely publication of an updated Equality Strategy will mitigate.

10. Other implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder:		x
Climate Change and Biodiversity:		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact: The Strategy will have a positive impact on Equality issues, helping the Council to meet our duties under the Equality Act.	x	
Safeguarding and Early Help: The Strategy has positive implications for work in this area since those with protected characteristics could also be vulnerable. The Strategy's objectives aim to ensure all groups are given the support they need to engage with Council services.	x	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): The Strategy itself publishes no personal data. If Services choose to collect Equalities data about their customers, then the collection, use and storage of such data must be GDPR compliant.	x	
Health and Wellbeing: The Strategy sets out what positive actions are being undertaken to improve health and wellbeing, particularly as regards the mental health of Council staff.	x	

11. Appendix

- 11.1 Chichester District Council Equality Strategy 2022-26

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 None