

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

3 April 2023

## Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plans

### Report of Assistant Director – Customer Focus

This report is public

## Purpose of report

To agree the action plans for delivering the council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitments for creating inclusive communities, services and an inclusive workforce, which are set out in its Equalities Framework, Including Everyone.

## 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the draft action plans for Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Services and Inclusive Workplaces.
- 1.2 To approve the addition to the Inclusive Communities plan of an action to "use our participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter as a spur to further activities which promote equality, diversity and inclusion locally".
- 1.3 To agree the recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee to amend the Inclusive Communities to include an additional action to "*develop and agree a policy for supporting national events that further our corporate priorities and reflect the diversity of our communities*" and provide further clarification under commitment 1.03 that the review of our support to refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants would consider the impact on migrants "*of all nationalities*".
- 1.4 To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Customer Focus to make minor amendments to the agreed action plans in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and the Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires all public bodies including councils to take extra steps to stop discrimination. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2.2 The duty means having to consider equality as part of our daily business and sets out specific requirements for achieving this, which are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
- Foster good relationships between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not,
- Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years and,
- Publish information at least annually, to show how we comply with the Equality Duty including information about employees and to people who are affected by our policies and procedures.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 In 2020, the council agreed an equalities framework, 'Including Everyone', which was co-produced with Oxfordshire County Council. This framework was to capture the councils' statutory obligations but also their commitments to going beyond what the law expects, to deliver inclusive communities, services and an inclusive workplace.
- 3.2 Earlier this year, the Executive agreed to refresh the action plan that underpinned the framework to reflect Cherwell as a standalone council and also the significant progress that has been made since it was developed.
- 3.3 The approach agreed and supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to develop an action plan for each commitment with a focus on ensuring the necessary foundations are in place to deliver them. The action plans would then provide the platform from which future plans could be developed, which focussed on delivering improvements.
- 3.4 The agreed approach also included setting up a joint councillor working group consisting of members from both the Overview and Scrutiny and Personnel Committees. This was to reflect the interdependencies between the commitments and in the spirit of being inclusive. The role of the group was to develop draft action plans for each commitment for consideration by the relevant committee. The intention was also for the group to continue meeting in the new municipal year, to oversee the implementation of these plans and help shape future improvement plans.
- 3.4 The members of the Group were Cllrs Chukwudi Okeke, Rebecca Biegel, Gemma Coton, Sandy Dallimore, David Hingley, Jason Slaymaker, and Amanda Watkins. At the first meeting, Cllr Hingley was elected as the Group's chair.
- 3.5 Over the course of four meetings, the Group reviewed and refined drafts of the three action plans. Appendices 2, 3 and 4 reflect that work.
- 3.6 Given recent progress with the Oxford Inclusive Economy Charter, an additional action was added in March 2023 to reflect the potential contribution of this policy agenda to promoting our EDI objectives.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 The council is committed to going above and beyond our statutory responsibilities in creating inclusive communities and services and an inclusive workforce. To do this effectively we need to have the right resources and infrastructure in place to:

- capture the latest EDI data and trends
- use the data available to identify and address any barriers
- ensure EDI implications are identified and considered at the earliest opportunities through our service planning and decision making processes

4.2 The Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Services, and Inclusive Workplaces Action Plans provides a structure in which this can be delivered and a basis on which further more specific, substantive work on this topic can be delivered.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the draft Inclusive Communities and Services Action Plans at their meeting on 14 March and resolved to recommend their approval by the Executive Committee, subject to two changes being made to the Inclusive Communities Action Plan. The first was to include an action to *“develop and agree a policy for supporting national events that further our corporate priorities and reflect the diversity of our communities”*. The second, to provide further clarification under commitment 1.03 that the review of our support to refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants would consider the impact on migrants *“of all nationalities”*. These changes are highlighted in the attached action plan.

5.2 The Personnel Committee discussed the Inclusive Workplaces Action Plan at their meeting on 15 March 2023. The Committee sought and received assurances on the inclusion of measures on age discrimination and on how the plans would impact applicants not from underrepresented groups.

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

6.1 Option One: To continue to deliver the original action plan. This option has been rejected as the council is now a standalone authority and therefore the action plan needs to reflect its single council status.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 The action plans can be delivered from within existing budgets and staffing resources. If their implementation gives rise to proposals that would require additional resources then these would be authorised separately.

Comments checked by:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance/Deputy S.151 Officer,  
01295 221545, [joanne.kaye@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.kaye@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as outlined in the report.
- 7.3 Specific duties for the Council also include the requirement to develop and publish equality objectives and to annually publish actions under way or planned to meet the requirements of the PSED.

Comments checked by:

Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services, [shahin.ismail@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:shahin.ismail@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### **Risk Implications**

- 7.4 Risks associated with the delivery of the action plans will be monitored and managed through the relevant service's risk register and escalated to the leadership register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader,  
01295 221556, [Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### **Equalities and Inclusion Implications**

- 7.5 The council is already meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, so these actions plans will demonstrate how we plan to deliver our commitment to go above and beyond our legal obligations.

Comments checked by:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader  
01295 221556, [Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

### **Sustainability Implications**

- 7.6 None

Comments checked by:

Jo Miskin, Climate Change Manager,  
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## **8.0 Decision Information**

**Key Decision**

**N/A**

**Financial Threshold Met:** N/A

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** N/A

**Wards Affected**

All

**Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

Including Everyone Framework

**Lead Councillor**

Councillor Richard Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

**Document Information**

**Appendix number and title**

- Appendix 1 – Including Everyone Framework
- Appendix 2 – Draft Inclusive Communities Services Action Plan
- Appendix 3 - Draft Inclusive Services Action Plan
- Appendix 4 – Draft Inclusive Workplace Action Plan
- Appendix 5 - Cherwell District Council's Pledges to the implementation of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership's (OIEP) Charter

**Background papers**

None

**Report Author and contact details**

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