

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 9 March 2016

Corporate Equality Objectives 2016 - 2019

This is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jane Warmington

Report Author: Christine Gale, Housing and Community Project Officer

1 Summary

The Corporate Equality Objectives 2016 - 2019 sets the council's aims on how to meet its statutory duties with regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011 toward its service users, members and employees; and to promote equality and eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination. Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council each have existing objectives which are due to end in April 2016. We are required to update these every four years and have taken the opportunity to develop "One Team" Corporate Equality Objectives for both Councils.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Executive are requested to adopt the:

2.1.1 Corporate Equality Objectives 2016–2019 and Action Plan in Appendix A;

2.1.2 Interpreting and Translation Policy in Appendix B;

2.1.3 British Sign Language Charter for Somerset in Appendix C.

The objectives aim to improve the lives of the residents in the Borough and support the Council's legal requirements outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The Council fails to properly consider equality impacts on protected groups within its decision making and this becomes subject to legal challenge.	3	4	12

<i>Managers to ensure reports to Members include Equality Impact Assessments, where relevant. Monitor delivery of the Corporate Equality Action Plan and provide six-monthly updates for corporate performance monitoring.</i>	2	3	6
Risk that service managers and relevant officers will not complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to ensure Members make informed decisions about new or changes to a service or policy, budget cuts or service review.	4	4	16
<i>Assistant Directors to ensure all service managers and relevant officers undertake Equality Awareness and Equality Impact Assessment. Continue to carry out a six monthly quality check of EIAs in Executive reports and provide a summary of results for JMT performance meetings</i>	3	3	9

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011 replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender. The Equality Act covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

4.2 The Corporate Equality Objectives document outlines how we build equality into commissioning, procurement and delivering services.

- Procurement: How we source goods, facilities and services
- Commissioning: The detail of the service
- Delivery: The provision of a service or information

And how we:

- Provide direction for the council's members, managers and employees with clear equality objectives
- Provide the basis for actions to be embedded within all service plans
- Document how the council will meet its statutory public duties in regard of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.
- Utilise Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to ensure consideration of impact on groups with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. These considerations are built into the design process of all changes to services and are fully considered by members in the decision making process.

The Corporate Equality Objectives will also consider issues specific to carers and military personnel and their families.

4.3 The council takes the approach that equalities should be mainstreamed within all service areas and should not be the sole responsibility of one officer. The Corporate Equality Objectives reflect this approach and the proposed objectives aim to support the mainstreaming of equalities throughout the council's services, policies and decision-making processes.

4.4 The following four objectives are proposed, Appendix A outlines the timeline for these objectives:

- **Objective 1**: Councillors will fully consider the equality implications of all decisions they make.

- **Objective 2:** Those with protected characteristics feel empowered to contribute to the democratic process that affects them; their input is used to inform the planning and delivery of services.
- **Objective 3:** Communities with protected characteristics are able to access services in a cost effective and appropriate way.
- **Objective 4:** Actions are taken to identify and reduce any inequalities faced by employees.

And specifically in our role as:

- **Service provider:**
Undertake continuous assessment of our services to ensure that we meet the needs of our communities.
- **Employer:**
Ensure equality of access and opportunity.
- **Purchaser of goods and services:**
Extend our equalities policy to organisations with whom we work in partnership and also those delivering services on our behalf. We will require partners and vendors to be compliant with the equalities standards we set for ourselves.
- **Elected Community leader:**
Promote our commitment to equality among members, staff, partners and the communities we serve.

4.5 Delivery of Corporate Equality Objectives

4.5.1 The objectives will be implemented through the Corporate Equality Action Plan; see Appendix A, individual services will produce equality action plans and include these in service plans. The actions within these plans will be identified from the following:

- Corporate Equality Objectives
- Equality Impact Assessments
- The views and feedback of service users, non-service users, staff, members and key stakeholders.

4.6 Performance Monitoring

4.6.1 Service plans will be monitored to ensure that the Corporate Equality Objectives are being delivered.

4.6.2 The Corporate Equality Action Plan will be monitored to ensure equality risks are assessed and that actions work toward achieving the aims of the Corporate Equality Objectives.

4.6.3 Performance reports will be submitted to members and to the Joint Corporate Management Team (JMT).

4.6.4 Equality Impact Assessments will be monitored via six monthly spot checks undertaken by the Housing and Community Team. Reports on these assessments will be sent to the JMT as part of their corporate performance monitoring.

5 Links to Corporate Aims/Priorities

5.1 The Corporate Equality Objectives have been revised to

- Address duties placed upon the council by the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011.
- Allow for manageable delivery and monitoring of progress.
- Align the objectives with the Equality Framework for Local Government

6 Financial considerations

6.1 Service areas will be responsible for identifying and addressing inequalities and promoting diversity. The resource implications of equality action plans should be considered by service areas as part of their budget setting process.

6.2 Resources are made available from the voluntary sector budget to assign services from Compass Disability to provide opportunities via the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group for community engagement with service providers.

6.3 Resources will be allocated from the corporate training budget to provide equalities training for staff and members.

7 Legal considerations

7.1 Completing equality impact assessments and working toward the achievement of the Corporate Equality objectives will ensure that the council is meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

None with regard to this report.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 In considering the needs of elderly, disabled and young people, there is a better opportunity for services to strengthen their commitment to safeguarding.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 The Corporate Equality Action Plan (CEAP) will be implemented:

- All reports to members will include an equality impact assessment.
- Staff and members will receive equality and diversity training.

11 Partnership Implications

- 11.1 There will be the need and opportunity to work with peers and partners within the voluntary sector toward the Corporate Equality Objectives. The council will be supported in this aim by Somerset Equalities Officers Group (SEOG).
- 11.2 All opportunities will be taken to carry out community engagement in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and services.

12 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 The council recognises that the health and wellbeing of the whole community benefits if all members of the community including those with protected characteristics have access to its services and information.

13 Asset Management Implications

- 13.1 None with regard to this report

14 Public Consultation

- 14.1 Consultation has been carried out with partners and other key stakeholders, including the countywide consultation event on 17th September 2015. Key findings from this consultation event included:
- How people access services:
 - The language organisations use such as jargon and acronyms
 - How people access information about our services
 - Can people access services due to physical accessibility issues
 - TDBC staff in particular front line staff understanding different disabilities and the affect this has on the support people need and how they access services.
 - A recognition by public organisations that not all people can use digital services delivery/access
 - Ability to access service due to reductions in public transport
 - Equality work with young people – intergenerational community projects
 - Hate crime is still an issue
 - Support available for people with mental health illness – greater clarity on available support and how people can access this
 - How well the work of equality is supported by public bodies
 - Training for all staff to support their understanding of equality.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency:

Every four years

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Corporate Equalities Action Plan
Appendix B	Interpreting and Translation Policy
Appendix C	British Sign Language Charter for Somerset

Contact Officers

Name	Christine Gale Housing & Community Project Officer	Name	Angela Summers Housing & Community Project Lead
Direct Dial	01823 358693 Ext: 2340	Direct Dial	01823 358682 Extn: 2482
Email	c.gale@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Email	a.summers@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Corporate Equality Action Plan 2016-2019

Item	Issue/recommendation	Proposed / Planned activities	Target date	Lead Officer	Progress	RAG	Success indicators
1	SWAP AUDIT - Ensure consistency in quality of officers' understanding of equality requirements.	Provide and promote Equality and Diversity Training for : - New Staff (Induction and Awareness) - Current Staff (3 yr cycle) - Report writers (EIA training - 3 yr cycle) - Members (Induction, 4 year cycle) Training to include sources of community profile data	Ongoing	Assistant Director, Corporate Services (RS) (HR) Assistant Chief Executive (BL) (Democratic)	Equality training offered to staff via tutored sessions and e-learning. Tutored Session Feb 2016.		Staff are trained to provide accessible services and support service users. EIAs are carried out to a consistently high standard across the authority
		Develop a system with HR to prompt refresher training for staff and report writers.	Jul-16	Assistant Director, Corporate Services (RS) (HR)			Council has confidence that staff are trained to the necessary standard to meet our statutory requirements.

2	SWAP AUDIT - Lack of evidence to back up equality considerations during the decision/policy making process.	Training for Tier 4 managers and report writers	Ongoing	HR Manager (FW)		<input type="checkbox"/>	Advancement of Equality is considered and evidenced during the planning of change to services
		Liaise with Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group and promote TDDDG meetings to Service and Programme Managers to ensure attendance so that disabled people are consulted on decisions (service changes/policies/budget including Transformation and Growth Programmes)	Six Monthly from March 2016	Report Writers via Housing & Community Project Officer, (HP)		<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultation on decisions made to advance equality and protect disabled people from discrimination.
	Lack of evidence that equality is used to help inform officer recommendations and is not an afterthought in the process.	Ensure that Equality Impacts are considered from the beginning and throughout the Transformation and Growth programmes, through emphasis in training to staff and Programme Managers	Ongoing	HR Manager (FW) and Corporate Transformation Programme Manager (KB)		<input type="checkbox"/>	EIAs are used to inform officer recommendations and to shape projects from the outset.
3	SWAP AUDIT - Equality Analysis not included in all reports and an effective quality monitoring framework is not in place	Send periodic reminders to Leads of requirement to consider equalities at the beginning of policy change and service development using community profile data	Six Monthly from April 2016	Housing & Community Project Lead (AS)		<input type="checkbox"/>	Reports to Members comply with legislation by including a high quality evidence based EIA. Members are able to make informed decisions.

4	SWAP AUDIT - Monitoring of Equality impacts is not fully embedded	Carry out a six monthly quality check of EIAs in Executive reports and provide a summary of results for JMT performance meetings.	Six Monthly from April 2016	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Undertake reminders through 1-1s and PREDs as required	Ongoing	All Assistant Directors			
5	PSED - To publish information annually to show compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty	Send out annual reminders to staff to complete Equality Data on SAP	Annual from November 2016	Assistant Directors/ HR Manager (FW)		<input type="checkbox"/>	All Equality information and Equality Objectives are published to ensure TDBC complies with the PSED.
		Prepare and publish Staff Equality profiles	Annually from February 2017	HR Manager (FW)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Update TDBC Equality internet and intranet pages with information relating to Equality and Diversity. See links following this table.	Annually from June 2016	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Review and refresh equality policy and objectives, publish new policy and objectives on TDBC and WSC websites and include new objectives in the CEAP.	April 2016 then 4 yearly	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)		<input type="checkbox"/>	EO's are published on time, delivered and TDBC and WSC are compliant with legislation
		Monitor delivery of the CEAP (this!) and provide six-monthly updates for corporate performance monitoring.	Six Monthly from September 2016	Corporate Performance & Strategy Manager (PH)		<input type="checkbox"/>	

6	Best Practise/Sharing information	Attend SEOG to keep up to date with legislative changes, government directives, share best practise and join up on projects and keep Joint Management Team informed of relevant changes.	Bi-monthly from March 2016	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnership working is enabling TDBC and WSC to meet our legislative requirements
		Create Interpreting and Translation policy and guidance for staff.(See appendix B)	Feb-16	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear translation procedures publicised and available to staff and customers
		TDBC and WSC endorse refreshed SEOG Deaf Charter. (see appendix C)	Mar-16	Housing & Community Project Officer (CG)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf and people with hearing loss are able to access TDBC and WSC services.

TDBC internet site link: <http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/council/goalsandvalues/goalandvalue?rid=/wpccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/Council/Goals%20and%20values/Equality%20and%20Diversity>

WSDC internet site link: <http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Council---Democracy/About-Your-Council/Equality---Diversity/Equality---Diversity-Scheme>

EIA form and guidance notes are available: TDBC link: <http://portal/sites/policyPerf/strategyandpartnerships/equality/default.aspx> or WSC 'W' drive: W:\Equalities\EIA TEMPLATE

The Equality Act introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty. This Duty places two specific requirements on the Council:

1) To publish information annually to show that it complies with the new Equality Duty

2) To prepare and publish equality objectives every four years

Outlined below are the actions which our Councils will deliver to meet these requirements:

1) Publishing Equalities Information

- a) We (Report Writers) publish our Equality Impact Assessments which demonstrate the impact of changes to our services or budget cuts with all Executive / Cabinet reports
- b) We publish a Workforce Equalities Report (HR Manager - FW) which includes information about the make-up of our workforce. We also have internal procedures for addressing equalities issues such as our Employment Equality Policy. This shows that we consider how our activities affect employees with different protected characteristics.
- c) We have published an Equalities Information Report (web site). This shows our commitment to understanding the community we serve and helps us to consider the impact that our services have on different sections of the community, including those with 'protected characteristics.'

2) Our Equality Objectives for 2016 - 2019

Objective 1: Councillors will fully consider the equality implications of all decisions they make.

- a) Ensure that 100% of reports which go to the Council Executive have accompanying Equality Impact Assessments, where required.
- b) Provide equality and diversity awareness training to all Councillors on Scrutiny Panels, Planning Committees and Executive/Cabinet.
- c) Make sure that 100% of all councillors have received equality and diversity awareness training.

Objective 2: Those with protected characteristics feel empowered to contribute to the democratic process that affects them; their input will be used in the planning and delivery of services.

- a) Providing service users with the opportunity to take part in the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group. Engage with communities via our membership of Somerset Equality Officers' Group (SEOG), and by participation in the SEOG community consultation events.
- b) Training for Service Managers will highlight the requirement to consider input from groups with protected characteristics and community profile data when making policy or service changes, as part of the equalities consideration. Links to data profile sites and details of protected characteristics below:

<http://inform.sine.org.uk/profiles/>

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/guidance-all/protected-characteristics>

- c) Ensure our partners and contractors adhere to equalities standards commensurate with our own by working with them to ensure they are aware of equalities legislation and its positive effect and the duties placed upon them under the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011.

Objective 3: Those with protected characteristics are able to access services in a cost effective and appropriate way.

- a) Improved access for service users who are deaf or hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired, disabled, and those who do not have English as their first language via staff training and guidance factsheets.
- b) Equalities information including reports, profiles and policies are available on the council website.

Objective 4: Actions are taken to identify and reduce or remove any inequalities faced by employees

- a) Ensure 100% of employees are contacted annually to ensure their employee equalities monitoring data is up to date
- b) Where cases of bullying and harassment arise, we undertake to consult with staff and trade unions to identify and treat the causes.

Appendix B

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Interpreting and Translation Policy

This is Taunton Deane Borough Council's Corporate Interpreting and Translation Policy. It sets out the council's approach to communicating with service users in the most accessible and effective way. The policy will support the council in delivering the "Corporate Equality Action Plan."

In order that all of our service users are able to access services appropriately it is essential that we have a policy to cover all communication needs. This policy covers the different language needs in Taunton Deane, including British Sign Language and braille.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following distinctions are made between 'translation' and 'interpreting'.

- Translation refers to the transferring of ideas expressed in writing from one language to another.
- Interpreting refers to the transfer of ideas expressed orally or through the use of gestures or signs.
- The term "service user" is used as an inclusive term to describe any stakeholder or group who interacts with the council.

The routes through which a service user will interact with the council and its services will be called 'access'. The four main types of access are:

- Electronic
- Telephone
- Face to face
- Written correspondence.

This policy and procedure refers to the council's service users who:

- do not have English as their first language
- have a sensory impairment
- have a learning difficulty or have low levels of literacy

Access to translating and interpretation services

The council has a list of preferred providers of interpreting and translation services for the provision of:

- Face to face interpretation
- Real-time telephone interpretation
- Document translation; languages, large print, braille or audio

Budgetary responsibilities for interpreting and translation services are met through revenue budgets of individual service areas.

Best Practice

- Persons under the age of 18 should not be used for interpreting or translation by council staff. The only exception to this rule would be to gain basic information during an emergency.
- All providers of interpreting and translation services are expected to adhere to the confidentiality agreement contained within the terms of the procurement contract.
- A record must be kept by the relevant service team of requests for interpretation and translation services and the council's response. This is important in the event of complaints, compliments and freedom of information requests.

Guidance for using a language/sign language interpreter

Booking an interpreter

- When booking an interpreter allow half an hour extra time to brief him/her.
- Check the preferred language, dialect and gender of the interpreter being booked.
- Use the interpreter's cultural knowledge to guide you on etiquette.

During the interview

- Introduce yourself and the interpreter. Ask the interpreter to explain their role.
- Explain to the service user that all information will be confidential to all present.
- Place the service user at the centre of the interview; maintain eye contact.
- Use plain English, avoid jargon and speak in short sentences.
- If you are concerned about what is taking place between the interpreter and the service user, stop the conversation and ask the interpreter to clarify.
- Recap and clarify if necessary.
- Ensure the interview finishes on time.

After the interview

- Debrief the interpreter.
- Give and receive feedback.
- Request clarification if difficulties were experienced.
- Do not ask the interpreter for their opinion of the case.
- Sign the interpreter's time sheet.
- Make a note of the start/end time.

Considerations on when to translate a document

- Is it essential to translate this document?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the evidence of need / that people would otherwise be disadvantaged?
- Does it include people for whom English is not their first language?
- Could the information be more effectively shared by using community advocates?
- Is there a statutory duty for providing written information in translated format?
- Would a summary suffice rather than a translation of the whole document?
- Will people across communities have the literacy skills to understand the document?
- Would it be better to translate an easy read version of the document?

Contact:
Christine Gale
Housing & Community Project Officer
Housing & Community Project Team
c.gale@tauntondeane.gov.uk
T: 01823 358693 or Ext: 2340

BSL Charter for Somerset

The Councils of Somerset want to improve access to our services by the Deaf community. We, the councils of Somerset make the following pledges:

Pledge One

Ensure access for Deaf People to information and services pledge:

Deaf people will get the same quality of provision, information and standards and the same right to be consulted as everyone else. This will make more Deaf people (include those who have problems with written information) aware of services and able to access these independently. It will also ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Pledge Two

Provide deaf awareness/training for staff pledge:

The councils of Somerset will ensure to provide their staff with awareness training around deafness, hard of hearing and hearing loss.

Pledge Three

Support Deaf children and families pledge:

At the point of diagnosis of deafness, health and education providers will offer parents genuinely informed choices, including a bilingual/bicultural approach. This will increase Deaf people's academic achievement and job opportunities and enhance family life by improving communication between children, parents/carers and siblings

Pledge Four

Ensure Deaf people can communicate effectively in BSL pledge:

The councils of Somerset recognise BSL as a language and that people speak in this language. All councils will provide interpretation facilities should they be requested to do so and will investigate different options to support Deaf people in communicating with the Council

Pledge Five

Consult the local Deaf community on a regular basis pledge:

Deaf people should have the right to be consulted on services or changes to services that affect them and to have input into consultations alongside other forums and user groups