

# **Report of the Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive to the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 13th October 2022**

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## **Subject:**

**Report on the refresh of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan 2022-25**

## **Summary statement:**

In November of 2021, the Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to peer review our work and approaches to equality. Their external scrutiny recommended areas of development for the Council. One of the recommendations was to refresh the Equalities Objectives and Equality Plan.

In taking this opportunity to refresh the Equalities Objectives and Equality Plan, we have considered the recommendations of the review, and carried out a comprehensive consultation process with our staff, internal teams and external stakeholders in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and the public sector.

The refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan 2022-25, is more reflective of the wider protected characteristics and low income groups, has synergy with our Council Plan, and states our approach to meeting our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

The refreshed Equality Diversity and Inclusion Plan has been impacted assessed through a session of consultation with our staff networks. As the proposed refreshed EDI Plan, the plans drives all of the equalities work within the Council it impacts on all of the equality objectives in the current plan.

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Assistant Director Office of Chief Executive:  
Jenny Cryer

Report Contact: Khalida Ashrafi  
Phone:  
E-mail: [Khalida.ashrafi@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:Khalida.ashrafi@bradford.gov.uk)

## **Portfolio:**

**Cllr Jabar and Cllr Hinchcliffe**

## **Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Corporate**

## 1. SUMMARY

This report accompanies the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft plan prior to it being finalised before it is presented to Executive Committee for approval in December.

## 2. BACKGROUND

In November 2021, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC) asked the Local Government Association (LGA) to deliver a bespoke Equality Peer Challenge, based on the Council's own Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2021-24 (Plan). The peer team considered each of the themes in the Plan and gave specific feedback on the four themes it covers.

The peer review team carried out a comprehensive review of the Council's policies and processes, spending three days on site in Bradford, during which they gathered information and views from around 30 meetings, spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff, together with Councillors and external stakeholders and spent collectively around 180 hours working on this review.

The findings of the review noted the commitment and dedication of the staff and stakeholder organisations on the equalities agenda both internally and externally. They also positively acknowledged the beginnings of recent and ongoing initiatives, such as the development of staff networks and the RESPECT campaign, and our plans to work on the allyship programme.

The peer review team provided the first part of their feedback in February 2022. In this interim report they made seven key recommendations, one of which was to refresh our existing Plan in line with their other recommendations.

The LGA will be returning in November 2022 to complete the review. This has enabled us to embed some of the positive things they saw starting to develop and to work on their initial recommendations.

The review also shone a light on areas of development for the Council as set out in the recommendations. These include training for staff, a firmer focus on LGBTQ+ and disability, and alignment of our key documents and the equality objectives to demonstrate how we aim to achieve change in this area of work.

This report focuses on a key area of action which was to review the Equality Objectives and Equality Plan.

### **Refresh of the current Equality Objectives and Equality Plan:**

The current Equalities Objectives and Equality Plan has been refreshed in light of the LGA recommendations.

Over the last few months, the refresh process has been undertaken with a comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation with internal staff, staff networks, the cross Council equality group, departments and leadership, and also our voluntary and community sector and our public sector partners.

As part of this process we have also aligned with key documents, including the Council Plan, and have taken into consideration the work of our disability staff network, who have produced a disability plan which addresses improvements in workforce and IT alongside access.

There are a number of district-wide strategic groups that are key to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) , these include the Wellbeing Board, The Systems EDI Group, and the West Yorkshire EDI Network. The work of these groups has also been considered in the drafting of this refreshed plan.

It is important for the plan to reflect our current challenges, priorities, and vision for the future. These include the impact of the energy crisis on low income groups, building a sustainable economy that plays to the strengths of our diverse residents, the City of Culture 2025, and how our plan can support its development to be inclusive.

The refreshed Council's equality objectives align with our Council Plan and take into account the LGA Equality Framework for local government. The objectives are set out in four key areas:

**Objective 1: An equal diverse and inclusive workplace:** Bradford District is a large and diverse place and our Council Plan commits to developing a workforce that properly reflects the people and places that we serve and a workplace that offers opportunities for people to progress regardless of their background and where people can thrive and feel confident and comfortable at work. This objective will help us make better decisions and support the delivery of innovative services.

**Objective 2: Inclusive and accessible services:** Services delivered and commissioned by the Council can play a significant part in addressing inequality, improving well-being and widening access to opportunities. In order to make the biggest impact on outcomes, ensure that they meet the needs of diverse communities and individuals and to maximise value for money we need to better understand who uses our services and where there are any gaps are in provision, the needs of our communities and the impact of our decisions about service provision. This means collecting appropriate data and intelligence, involving people in service design and delivery and ensuring that decisions about services and resource allocation are properly informed in terms of their impact on equalities and targeted appropriately.

**Objective 3: An inclusive economy:** People's economic circumstances can have a big impact on their health and well-being, the housing that they live in and on social mobility. The district has higher than average rates of unemployment, high rates of youth unemployment, relatively low levels of participation in the economy and lower than average wages. Bradford District offers significant potential for economic growth and we need to make sure that everyone has the chance to

benefit from it. By supporting people into good work, building our skills base, investing locally and delivering decent housing to meet everyone's needs, we can progress towards our goal of building an inclusive economy that works for everyone.

**Objective 4: Inclusive communities:** We cannot tackle inequality without tackling discrimination and standing up to hate crime. We must also work to integrate communities to build understanding and challenge myths, and we need to ensure that everyone has the chance to have their voices heard and to play their part in civic life. Tackling hate and discrimination, building cohesion and empowering local people are all central themes in our Council Plan. This objective will help to ensure that Council services are focussed on supporting our communities to be safe, strong and active.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The plan has been refreshed alongside a review from Stonewall and work with our Disability Staff Network to formulate a Disability Action Plan, and with our LGBTQ Staff Network, to support wider inclusion of people who identify as being from an LGBTQ background or having a Disability. There has also been considerable effort to progress race equality working with the District's Race Equality Network and other partners following concerns raised through the Black Lives Matter campaign, and through COVID inequalities.

### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

This report impacts the whole Council and will therefore have budget considerations for each department to fulfil obligations within the Plan to the upmost of their capacity. It has been noted that equality impact assessments will be required on all budget considerations.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

The Plan has no legal or financial risk as resources and legal duties have been considered and measured as satisfactory.

### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

The plan has been approved to have met legal requirements and fulfilment of duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The plan is sustainable within the Council's current budget and resources with equality at the heart of the overall Council Plan.

## **7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

The plan is in line with the Council Plan and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, specifically under the Clean Air Plan.

## **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of actions within the plan, especially regarding hate crime, should support priorities within the Safer Community Plan.

## **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan directly relates to applying the Human Rights Act and ensures that everyone's rights are upheld.

## **7.5 TRADE UNION**

Trade Unions have been consulted on the refresh process and have been sent the refreshed plan for consideration.

## **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Elected members and the portfolio holder have had input in to the plan.

## **7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)**

N/A

## **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

N/A

## **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

N/A

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

## **9. OPTIONS**

Option 1: The Committee provide feedback on the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25 to enable the Council to and meet its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That members provide their comments and feedback on the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25.

## **11. APPENDICES**

- 1 Refreshed Equality Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25
- 2 Council plan 2021-25

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

none