

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 July 2019
Subject:	Equality and Diversity – Vision and Action Plan for 2019/20		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Equality Action Plan 2019-20 2. Equality Action Plan 2019-20 Internal 3. Cross-party Equalities Motion 4. Equalities Website Content 2019		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the work of the Equalities Working Group and the Equalities Action Plan for 2019/20.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the work of the Equalities Working Group (EWG) and the Equalities Action Plan (EAP) for this year be endorsed.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 100 pieces of legislation aimed at stopping discrimination and promoting a fair and more equal society. It created requirements for public bodies like Gloucester City Council, known as the Public Sector Equality Duty. The aim is to positively promote equality, not merely to avoid discrimination. The Act challenges organisations to understand equality and embed it within their everyday practise.
- 3.2 Protected Characteristics were established under the Equality Act, these are:
- Age
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Disability
 - Sex (gender)

- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (for the general duty)

3.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission explains “the broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. If you do not consider how a function can affect different groups in different ways, it is unlikely to have the intended effect. This can contribute to greater inequality and poor outcomes. The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.”

3.3 By law public bodies must try 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 relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.4 The Act explains that ‘due regard’ for advancing equality involves:

- **Removing or minimising disadvantages** experienced by people due to their protected characteristics.
- **Taking steps to meet the needs** of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- **Encouraging** people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.5 The **specific duties** of the Equality Act require public bodies to annually publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the equality duty, and to set equality objectives.

3.6 For our organisation, equalities is split in to internal (HR) and external (communities) strands. All Equalities focussed work is brought together through the Equalities Working Group, which meets quarterly and has representation from various teams across the organisation as well as cross-party political support.

3.7 The Equalities Working Group was established in November 2018 following a self-assessment and benchmarking exercise by colleagues who assessed Gloucester City Council’s existing equalities work. For this, we used the Local Government Association’s Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG), which comprises five performance areas:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

- 3.8 The EFLG categorises three levels of achievement; Developing, Achieving and Excellent. We found that our current achievement levels were:
- Knowing your communities - **Developing**
 - Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment - **Developing/Achieving**
 - Involving your communities - **Developing/Achieving**
 - Responsive services and customer care - **Developing/Achieving**
 - A skilled and committed workforce - **Achieving**
- 3.9 The self-assessment and first working group session found that organisational strengths included self-awareness, equalities well embedded, expectation of high standards, showing community leadership, cross party support and Council involvement in various awareness drives such as dementia friends and hate crime.
- 3.10 We found that we could improve on knowing our communities, streamline equalities related paperwork and processes, develop the role of Members in equalities and explore our approach to data – meaning that we focus on where we need data and what for, so that we use it effectively.
- 3.11 Through the self-assessment, we found that the City Council already has equalities embedded well, with the following illustrating some of how we do this:
- Hate crime champions
 - Dementia friends
 - Safeguarding of adults and children
 - Assisted Waste & Recycling Collections for those who are unable to move their bins and boxes to a collection point.
 - Additional waste and recycling collections over Christmas and Ramadan
 - Disabled Facility Grants
 - Ensuring that play areas on new developments take into account the needs of children with disabilities
 - Best Bar None Scheme incorporates disability criteria.
 - We endeavour to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the development of all new and reviewed policies, strategies, function, services and processes.
 - ABCD and resident led action, which we support, and which promotes positive relationships within the community
- 3.12 Annual reports on workforce equalities go to SMT and are published on our website. These include gender pay gap information and workforce demographics. Various information is published online from teams across the organisation which illustrates how we are working towards our Public Sector Equality Duties, however

for clarity and ease of access, this information is to be drawn together in one clear place going forwards.

- 3.13 The Equalities Working Group explored various strands of work relevant across the organisation which related to the five key areas of the EFLG and established our Terms of Reference as “To ensure inclusive agenda setting by:
- Understanding how Equalities applies to the work we do, embed this knowledge within the organisation and continually improve how we work
 - Knowing the communities of Gloucester and working with them on a range of issues
 - Understanding how we can best serve Gloucester’s communities, and work with them as partners
 - Developing the roles of elected members, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and full Council in driving Equalities forward
 - Increasing fairness and equality across the organisation, both internally and externally
 - Joining networks from the City and County councils, partner agencies and voluntary and community sector, in order to meet Equality aspirations for Gloucester”
- 3.14 Details of the Equality Action Plan for 2019/20 are included in section 8, Future Work

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 ABCD and strengths based working is at the core of our approach as a City Council and we continue to thread it through our equalities objectives too. ABCD is a key principle in helping us achieve our equalities aims, which focus heavily on knowing our communities better. This includes telling stories and raising awareness of community based action, which will help to promote and foster good relations within the community.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The Equalities Action Plan (EAP) will contribute to increased cohesion and the promotion of good relationships within our communities. Items included in the EAP have a focus on “knowing your communities” which was a development section in our self-assessment using the Equalities Framework for Local Government. We have ensured that community focussed objectives tie in with ABCD and strengths-based working, which contributes to healthier neighbourhoods with residents more engaged with where they live and who they live near.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty is a statutory duty.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The recommendations included in this report as part of the Equalities Action Plan were agreed upon by the cross-team, cross-party Equalities Working Group.

Several strands of work were considered and prioritised in to the EAP for this year. Items not included in this year's plan include some longer-term goals which need initial steps (included in this years EAP) to be completed before we can work on bigger goals.

7.2 Items not included in this years EAP have been saved separately and will be reconsidered once this year's action plan has been completed. The Equalities Working Group were keen that 2019/20's equalities action plan includes objectives that we can build on in coming years to ensure we continue to meet our public sector equality duty and also work in line with other community focussed strategies such as ABCD.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 The Equalities Action Plan for 2019/20 focusses on the following:

Objective	Detail
Explore our approach to data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on knowing our communities – benchmark with LGA • Define what data we need/want and how we will use it • Task & Finish group to explore data wants & needs • Focus on housing & homelessness this year
Link Networks between City & County councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link networks such as Prism, disability, carers networks • Shared support for staff between city & county networks
Define Equalities objectives internally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities policy and mission statement • Increase use and understanding of Equality Impact Assessments • Publish specific equalities information online • Develop the role of Overview & Scrutiny and members in Equalities • Cross party endorsement of Equalities work • Equalities training opportunities for staff and members generally and on specific topics • Ensure contractors are conforming to equalities standards
Tell the stories & raise awareness to advance equality and foster good relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness days & initiatives calendar for Council to focus resources • Define key initiatives to support for each year • Link in with Culture objectives • Share more positive stories from the community

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Community-Council mentoring scheme
Front facing services redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reshape consultation policy • ACEs aware services • Dementia friendly spaces • Trauma informed spaces

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There should be no financial implications to carrying out the Equalities work, other than small costs for things such as the purchase of flags to fly on awareness days. These costs can be met from day to day budgets.

9.2 In terms of supporting the community to celebrate equalities, residents who get in touch with the Community Wellbeing Team can access funding through Your Gloucester grants and other grants already available through the voluntary and community sector, which Community Wellbeing Officers can support residents to apply for.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The Council must meet its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. There are no adverse legal implications attached to the work contained within the Equalities Action Plan.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 The Equalities Action Plan gives Gloucester City Council opportunities to further embed equalities and ABCD within our communities, giving us opportunity to know our communities better and helping to celebrate diversity and create pride in our City.

11.2 The only risk identified is where residents or communities may wish to hold particular celebrations or awareness events which the Council have not already identified or which the Council does not have resources to be able to lead on. This is mitigated by the fact that Community Wellbeing Officers and community builders are in place to support residents to lead themselves on issues which are important to them, including supporting them to access funding where needed.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 It should be noted that People Impact Assessments (PIAs) are to be renamed Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) going forwards. This is for two reasons – firstly, the title EIA is much more descriptive of what the assessment actually is and would be in line with the terminology that other organisations use, enabling clarity. Secondly, the Information Commissioner’s Office, which regulates privacy and information rights, requires organisations to complete Privacy Impact Assessments,

also called PIAs. Renaming our Equality Impact Assessments EIAs will avoid confusion between the two.

- 12.2 People Impact Assessments/Equality Impact Assessments are routinely carried out across the organisation where changes to services are proposed. The responsibility for ensuring this happens sits with service managers, and SMT and the democratic process provide governance and scrutiny for this.
- 12.3 Updated guidance on Equality Impact Assessments will be circulated to colleagues this year as part of the work agreed on the Equalities Action Plan. This will also include information and training via GMT, highlighting the support available to colleagues when completing impact assessments, and streamlining a process for monitoring and publication of impact assessments.
- 12.4 An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken for our Equalities Action Plan and there is no negative impact identified.
- 12.5 Considerations are given when undertaking all community engagement work to ensure that we do not adversely impact on any group and that we are fostering good relations and promoting advancement of opportunities within the community.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 ABCD, community building and strengths-based working all contribute to stronger, better connected communities. Research shows that residents who know their neighbours feel safer where they live, and shared activity amongst communities makes those areas safer. By focussing the EAP on knowing our communities better, we will contribute to increased community safety. By supporting awareness and celebration of diversity within our communities, we will contribute to more cohesive communities.
- 13.2 Supporting resident led action leads to more creative ideas and problem solving, with more community ownership and greater sustainability. By celebrating the achievements of our communities we hope to promote more positive resident led action, equality and good relations and push out negative activities occurring.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None

Background Documents: None