

<b>Title of Report</b>	Equality Plan - Final Draft		
<b>Key Decision No</b>	CED S272		
<b>For Consideration By</b>	Cabinet		
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 February 2024		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities		
<b>Classification</b>	Open		
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All		
<b>Key Decision &amp; Reason</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Yes</td> <td>Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards		
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	N/A		
<b>Group Director</b>	Dawn Carter McDonald, Interim Chief Executive		

## 1. Cabinet Member's introduction

- 1.1. In November 2022, Hackney Council adopted a new Strategic Plan. This presented the Council's ambitions for the next four years. It also described the key challenges. The plan set out how we responded to these challenges, working with residents and partners. The plan included commitments for how the Council maximised its own resources - jobs, contracts, and making best use of our spaces and assets. The plan was drafted at a time when we were seeing deep inequalities in society, and in our borough, after over a decade of austerity from national government cuts and after the pandemic which hit Hackney residents hard. The Strategic Plan outlined draft Equality Objectives, to be developed further in an equality plan.
- 1.2. The draft Equality Objectives and a summary equality plan were then developed further between January 2023 and July 2023, to set out how we meet our legal duties under the Equality Act and progress the commitment to fairer outcomes in the Strategic Plan.
- 1.3. Alongside this, commitments had already been made in the last Single Equality Scheme to draft an LGBTQIA Strategic Framework.

- 1.4. In July 2020, a motion was passed to work towards being an anti-racist organisation. The Anti-Racism Framework was then developed, building on existing work, and strengthening the Council's resolve to change as an institution.
- 1.5. Both the LGBTQIA Strategic Framework and Anti-Racism Framework are presented in these papers, along with the Equality Plan. Both frameworks have helped us to develop the final Equality Plan, applying the lessons of both to our overall approach to equality. They have helped us consider what is needed to tackle inequality and eliminate discrimination and engage differently with residents. They are discrete documents within the wider Equality Plan. In appending these frameworks, we are not diluting these issues, but situating the actions needed in a wider frame and justification.
- 1.6. In July 2023, all three documents were approved by Cabinet for consultation.
- 1.7. Consultation and engagement took place between 20th November 2023 and 21st January 2024. The consultation helped finalise the overall objectives for the Equality Plan. The engagement activity helped shape the commitments that sit below this plan. Over 790 staff, partners and residents were involved.
- 1.8. The final plan objectives have been shaped by this feedback, and as we develop a more detailed action plan, the feedback we have collected and analysed will continue to be invaluable.
- 1.9. Over the last few years, the Council has adopted motions that champion the needs and rights of groups. This Equality Plan considers how we can include these motions. The motions cover:
  - anti-racism
  - supporting trans rights
  - considering the impact of perimenopause and menopause
  - understanding the needs of single parents
  - tackling islamophobia and anti-semitism
  - becoming age friendly and dementia friendly
  - being committed to the "right to food."

#### *How we meet our legal duties*

- 1.10. The Equality Plan will set out how we meet our legal duties under the Equality Act. The Equality Act identifies "protected characteristics." Public bodies must take action to tackle discrimination and disadvantage when it relates to a protected characteristic. We have to think about how we foster good relations between all groups.

- 1.11. Public Bodies are also expected to publish draft objectives and consult on them. This Equality Plan presents the final objectives following consultation.

*Other groups we want to consider as part of this Equality Plan*

- 1.12. As well as thinking about protected characteristics, there are other groups we are considering in this Plan. We understand these groups are not protected under law. By identifying these groups, we are able to consider a wider set of needs that we need to consider in order to focus on fairer outcomes for residents.
- 1.13. The original draft of the Equality Act contained a "socio-economic duty." The Duty did not become law but Hackney adopted it on a voluntary basis. This is because there is a strong link between socio-economic disadvantage and inequality. We therefore need to consider how someone could be more disadvantaged because of their socio-economic status, or we might be missing a key driver of inequality. We have considered this in our plans in 2013 and again in 2018.
- 1.14. Socio-economic disadvantage could be about education, occupation, income, locality, housing or social class. There is no singular way to measure "social class."
- 1.15. The new plan also focuses on those who are vulnerable because of life experiences, based on borough needs. During consultation and engagement, we heard about other groups who we needed to consider for this reason. These groups are detailed later in this report.
- 1.16. The plan seeks to address needs and issues under these proposed equality objectives:  
Community facing:  
  1. Eradicate inequality at every life stage by taking protective, preventative positive action
  2. Building opportunity and well-being
  3. Celebrate and serve diverse communities and value the contribution they make  
Underpinning organisational objectives:  
  4. Embed equality into service plans and practice across the council and the borough
  5. Change as an institution to ensure internal and systemic change
- 1.17. This plan is written at a time of global conflict. This impacts the council and residents of Hackney, directly and indirectly. We are a diverse borough and our residents will have friends and family caught up in conflict. It impacts how safe residents feel as we have seen an increase

over the last few weeks of Islamophobia and anti-semitism in Hackney, London, and across the world.

- 1.18. In the context of this global conflict and of societal change, and greater inequality, it has been very important to take time to reset our approach to equality in Hackney. The resident insight we received has shifted the way we frame our objectives, and these changes are detailed in this report. In the interests of transparency and accountability I will bring a full action plan, with measures of success back to Cabinet later this year. This will build on the high Equality Plan presented today.

## **2. Group Director's introduction**

- 2.1. In November 2022 Hackney adopted a new Strategic Plan at Cabinet and Council, Working Together for a Better Hackney. The New Strategic Plan sets out the ambitions for the Council for the next four years, as well as the challenges we face.
- 2.2. A final Equality Plan has been drafted to help us consider these ambitions through an equality prism. The New Equality Plan will replace the existing Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022.
- 2.3. To develop the plan, we reviewed progress against the last plan, considered new needs, drivers and insights and took account of the direction of travel for wider plans and strategies and commitments in the strategic plan and manifesto commitments.
- 2.4. In July 2023, all three documents were approved by Cabinet for consultation.
- 2.5. Consultation and engagement took place between 20th November 2023 and 21st January 2024. The consultation helped finalise the overall objectives for the Equality Plan. The engagement activity helped shape the commitments that sit below this plan. Over 790 staff, partners and residents were involved.
- 2.6. The final plan objectives have been shaped by this feedback, and as we develop a more detailed action plan the feedback we have collected and analysed will continue to be invaluable.

- 2.7. LGBTQIA Strategic Framework and Anti-Racism Framework are presented in these papers, along with the Equality Plan. They are discrete documents within the wider Equality Plan.
- 2.8. Now we have got the framing and priorities right, we need to develop a detailed action plan. Feedback from the consultation and engagement will also help us finalise this more detailed plan. We only have a duty to publish Equality Objectives. Residents have, however, been clear that they want us to be more open and transparent about what we do and how we measure success. In the interests of transparency and accountability, we will also bring back a more detailed equality action plan to Cabinet later this year. We will be developing a full refreshed equality needs assessment, informed by the insight from the consultation and engagement phase.
- 2.9. The Council has an Equality and Cohesion Policy which summarises Hackney's understanding of 'equality, diversity and cohesion.' This Policy will need to be updated in the light of the new objectives and this will also be brought to Cabinet later this year.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. **To recommend to Full Council that the Equality Plan be adopted, along with the anti-racism framework and LGBTQIA framework:**
- **Appendix 1: Equality Plan**
  - **Appendix 2: the anti-racism framework**
  - **Appendix 3: the LGBTQIA framework**
- 3.2. **To agree that a full action plan for the Equality Plan will be brought to Cabinet later this year**
- 3.3. **To agree that the Equality and Cohesion Policy is also brought to Cabinet later this year, so it can reflect the new objectives**

#### **4. Reason(s) for decision**

- 4.1. In November 2022 Hackney adopted a new Strategic Plan at Cabinet and Council. An equality plan is needed to support the ambitions of the strategic plan and political priorities and consider these ambitions through an equality prism. The new Equality Plan will replace the existing Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022 and so we are at a key point of change in policy which requires consultation and engagement. It is a statutory duty to publish equality objectives, and consult on them. In the interests of transparency, we published and consulted on a summary plan, rather than just the objectives. Consultation and engagement on the Draft Equality Plan took place between 20th November 2023 and 21st January 2024. This has informed the final draft of the equality plan.
- 4.2. The last Equality Scheme included a commitment to developing a refreshed LGBTQIA plan. In July 2020, a motion was passed to work towards being an anti-racist organisation. This helped strengthen the focus on what we need to change within institutions. Both the LGBTQIA Strategic Framework and Anti-Racism Framework are presented in these papers, along with the Equality Plan. They are discrete documents within the wider Equality Plan. In appending these frameworks, we are not diluting these documents but situating these plans in a wider frame and justification.

#### **5. Details of alternative options considered and rejected**

- 5.1. We could have done what is statutorily required and only published draft objectives, without developing the more detailed plans that flow from these objectives. In the early consideration of the Equality Plan this option was rejected by corporate leadership so that sufficient attention could be given to the positive actions needed to tackle inequality of outcomes, build opportunity and celebrate diversity and to address the challenges for us as an institution, and for statutory partners.
- 5.2. We could have incorporated objectives into the wider Strategic Plan. An equality plan was considered to be needed in order to consider the Strategic Plan ambitions for fairer outcomes through an equality prism.

#### **6. Background**

- 6.1. The new Equality Plan will replace the existing Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022 and so we are at a key point of change in policy which requires consultation and engagement. It is, furthermore, a statutory duty to publish equality objectives, and consult on them.
- 6.2. The [Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022](#) was developed to identify the proactive work needed, informed by a [detailed analysis of demographics and of inequality](#).

- 6.3. The pandemic revealed the stark racial inequality faced by some groups and, in response, the Council adopted a further commitment to anti-racism in July 2020. In July 2020, the Council passed a motion to work towards becoming an anti-racist organisation. This helped strengthen the focus on what we need to change within institutions. We have now developed an anti-racism action plan.
- 6.4. In the Single Equality Scheme, we committed to developing a new LGBTQIA plan. In response, we have developed the LGBTQIA strategic framework.
- 6.5. Both the LGBTQIA Strategic Framework and Anti-Racism Framework are presented in these papers, along with the Equality Plan. Both frameworks have helped us to develop the final Equality Plan, applying the lessons of both to our overall approach to equality. They have helped us consider what is needed to tackle inequality and eliminate discrimination and engage differently with residents. They are discrete documents within the wider Equality Plan. In appending these frameworks, we are not diluting these issues but situating these plans in a wider frame and justification.
- 6.6. In March 2020, a [Community Impact Assessment](#) was established, so that the likely direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic in the short, medium and long term, could at least be understood, in advance of the official data.
- 6.7. We have drawn on data from this Community Impact Assessment and analysis of impacts from the cost of living crisis and worsening poverty. We combined this with data we hold internally and data from the 2021 Census, bearing in mind that this was a snapshot of a time when we were in lockdown and that the picture may change. We have noted that the way we collect and use data around equalities needs improving and this forms part of the plan.
- 6.8. Formal consultation and engagement on the plan involved over 790 staff, residents and stakeholders. The key changes that have been made are summarised in the Consultation section of this report.
- 6.9. *How we meet our legal duties*
- 6.10. The Equality Plan will set out how we meet our legal duties under the Equality Act. The Equality Act identifies “protected characteristics” which are listed below. It is illegal to discriminate against someone because of their:
- age
  - disability (this includes carers of all ages)
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage and civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race
  - religion or belief

- sex
- sexual orientation

6.11. Public bodies are required to work really proactively to tackle discrimination and disadvantage that is related to a protected characteristic. We have to think about how we foster good relations between all groups. This is called “Due Regard.” Marriage and civil partnership is only a protected characteristic when we are thinking about discrimination.

6.12. Public Bodies are also expected to publish draft objectives and consult on them. This Equality Plan presents a set of draft objectives for consultation. We are also asked to publish data about communities and workforce, which is also being updated as part of the development of this Equality Plan.

6.13. As well as thinking about protected characteristics, there are other groups we are considering in this Plan. We understand these groups are not protected under law. By identifying these groups, we are able to consider a wider set of needs that we need to consider in order to focus on fairer outcomes for residents. The original draft of the Equality Act contained a “socio-economic duty.” The Duty did not become law, but Hackney adopted it on a voluntary basis. This is because there is a strong link between socio-economic disadvantage and inequality. We therefore need to consider how someone could be more disadvantaged because of their socio-economic status, or we might be missing a key driver of inequality. We also try to consider how someone could be more disadvantaged because of their socio-economic status. We have considered this in our plans in 2013 and again in 2018.

6.14. Socio-economic disadvantage could be about education, occupation, income, locality, housing or social class. There is no singular way to measure “social class.” Hackney’s approach considers income inequality and poverty, housing, skills levels and occupation. As there is no national measurement, we have to draw on academic research and qualitative insight. In this new plan, we want to focus in particular on:

- 20% of households living in poverty which rises to 36% of households after housing costs are taken into account
- 48% of children who live in poverty
- People on low incomes in the private rented sector

6.15. The new plan also focuses on those who are vulnerable because of life experiences. This is so we ensure we are considering need through different lens when we undertake service planning and delivery and engage with residents. During consultation and engagement, we heard compelling reasons to include other groups. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Looked after children, care experienced people and care leavers
- Single parents and teen parents
- People with insecure immigration status
- Ex Armed Forces



- People with multiple interconnected challenges (“complex needs”) including those who fall below statutory thresholds
- People experiencing perimenopause and menopause
- People in insecure private rented accommodation, at risk of homelessness or living in precarious conditions (eg sofa surfing) and people in temporary accommodation
- Domestic abuse victims and survivors
- People with an offending history

6.16. *Objectives*

<b>Working with communities to:</b>		
<b>1. Eradicate inequality at every life stage by taking protective, preventative positive action</b>	<b>2. Building opportunity and well-being</b>	<b>3. Celebrate and serve diverse communities and value the contribution they make</b>
<i>Rationale</i>		

<p>Some groups are more likely to face inequality and experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty. This is because they have experienced structural disadvantage that is rooted in prejudice and discrimination. This is both historical and current and deeply embedded into societal structures, including public institutions.</p> <p>There is proven bias and prejudice in the system that impacts on life chances and outcomes. This can include access to early help.</p> <p>We can have the greatest impact on life chances in early years. We need to recognise that inequality usually gets worse as people get older.</p>	<p>Poverty and socio-economic disadvantage are the main causes of inequality.</p> <p>Poverty in London and in Hackney is largely driven by market forces - housing costs, the stagnation of wages and greater job insecurity.</p> <p>For people who were already in poverty, it is getting worse. Other groups are falling into difficulty. Many more people are living in more insecure and precarious situations and in work poverty. This is leading to growing inequalities. This affects the whole community.</p> <p>This is then leading to a “hollowing out” of London and growing inequality, with middle income households and those with children leaving the city.</p>	<p>Hackney’s diverse, dynamic and changing population is what makes Hackney feel unique. It gives different areas their unique sense of identity.</p> <p>The borough is a cohesive borough where people from different backgrounds generally get on with each other.</p> <p>There is, however, a risk that the very communities that helped create a sense of place are excluded and marginalised in a changing borough.</p> <p>Community and community organisations are under strain and there are lines of tensions in communities. This is not helped by the current national sentiment which is hostile to the very communities that need support and advocacy, including refugees and asylum seekers and trans people. Other groups have been positioned as a “burden on the state”- including children with special educational needs.</p> <p>Although there is a high level of trust in the population overall, this is much lower for Black and Global majority residents and social housing tenants.</p>
<p><i>Our response</i></p>		

<p>We will take protective, preventative and positive action at every life stage from maternity to old age, working with communities and across the system:</p> <p>to address the root causes of inequality and dismantle structural disadvantages so that we see equity of outcomes at every life stage: Pregnancy, School readiness, Key Stage 4 (GCSE), Leaving school, Employment, Parenthood, Caring and Old age This work needs to be specific and intersectional.</p> <p>the Council will need to: work preventatively with partners to expose and eliminate bias and prejudice in the system.</p> <p>Examples include- Assessment of additional needs, Exclusions, Entering the criminal justice system, Unemployment, Eviction, Debt and Illness.</p> <p>we will create fair access to early help and support for residents experiencing difficulties, recognising the community and informal support that residents need.</p>	<p>Work with partners to create a safety net for those in poverty.</p> <p>We will support people to thrive and access opportunity and shape the local economy and growth so that it benefits residents.</p> <p>We will do what we can to tackle the market forces that drive poverty - housing costs, the stagnation of wages and greater job insecurity.</p> <p>We need, however, to see national policy changes to bring about a benefits system that makes work pay, a national economic strategy that brings better paid, secure jobs and major interventions to tackle the housing crisis. This needs to include improving standards in private rented housing.</p> <p>We will make Hackney a more inclusive and accessible place and promote wellbeing.</p>	<p>We need to put residents and communities first, thinking about underserved communities.</p> <p>Residents will be involved in shaping plans through effective engagement and collaboration.</p> <p>We will develop partnerships with communities and community organisations. They can help us support communities and build trust and confidence in the state.</p> <p>We will celebrate all our diverse communities and stand up for groups who face hostility.</p> <p>We will break down barriers that limit our reach, like language and digital barriers.</p> <p>We will develop a segmented, targeted and intersectional approach to community needs.</p> <p>We will review how well communities are getting on with each other and refresh our approach to how we bring different communities together.</p>
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## Underpinning organisational objectives

### 4. Embed equality into service plans and practice across the council and the borough

Inequality is deeply embedded into societal structures and institutions. We need to change as an institution in order for this plan to have an impact. We need to embed an inclusive, humble, anti-discriminatory, anti-racist approach into service planning and practice.

#### Service planning and design and decision making

- We will develop new service planning and design guidance in line with these objectives, improving the way we use service and population data to develop a more consistent method for understanding inequality
- We will review and refresh guidance on monitoring / information collection of all equality groups
- We will develop our approach to impact assessments- strength based, systemic, trauma informed, anti-discriminatory and bringing in a community impact assessment
- We will update our commissioning and procurement guidance
- We will focus on disability equality and access in service planning

#### Language and communication

- We will refresh the current Inclusive Language guide and develop a consistent approach to accessible communications
- We will adopt guidance and resources on tackling language barriers

#### Participation and engagement

- We will develop consistent engagement and co-production principles that encourage ongoing collaboration with residents on long lasting solutions
- We will establish more collaborative ways to engage residents on equality issues

#### Developing our understanding of communities

- We will develop our understanding of different communities, identifying gaps in our understanding
- We will refresh our approach to reaching diverse communities

### 5. Change as an institution to ensure internal and systemic change

#### *Rationale:*

Inequality is deeply embedded into societal structures and institutions. We need to change as an institution in order for this plan to have an impact.

We need to develop an inclusive, humble, anti-discriminatory, anti-racist workforce that reflects the diversity of Hackney at all levels, and is confident working with communities from a trauma informed perspective.

- We will take action to develop the leadership and management culture and ensure that there is workforce diversity at all levels.
- We need a workforce that:

- understands what being inclusive, humble, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist means
- is trauma informed
- leads / works as a system- from a resident / borough not service perspective
- understands Hackney's diverse communities and is aware of the impact of poverty
- reflects the diversity of Hackney, at all levels
- can collaborate with communities

- 6.17. We will need to set up the right oversight to ensure that we are:
- Working together towards a common set of outcomes and intermediate outcomes.
  - Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into service design, delivery and practice.
  - Developing an inclusive, open and humble and anti-racist leadership style
  - Progressing action to ensure that the workforce reflects the diversity of Hackney's population at all levels.
  - Tracking progress against intermediate outcomes and regularly assessing if these are making a difference on our long term outcomes.
- 6.18. Residents have told us that we need to be open and self-critical about past shortcomings and set out measures to avoid repeating these patterns of failure. They want to see the involvement of residents and community partners, including the voluntary and community sector, in holding the Council to account, as well as frontline workers. There are existing examples of working with the community that the Council leads or has helped shape that could be learned from.
- 6.19. There need to be anonymous feedback loops for both residents and staff to share their experiences about equality in Hackney. There is a call for brave and courageous leadership that is able to listen and be more creative and open in order to move further forward.
- 6.20. The Council will use this feedback to establish final governance arrangements, based on the following components:
- An ongoing way to gather community feedback on an ongoing and dynamic way
  - A delivery group representing all involved in progressing this plan
  - A thematic exploration of progress and impact led by the lead Cabinet Member for Equality
  - Oversight of progress by the Council's Corporate Leadership and Cabinet will jointly consider progress on a six monthly basis.
  - An annual report on progress against this plan that is resident facing and in an accessible form
- 6.21. We will ask formal partnerships and partners to commit to working towards

a shared approach to tackling key inequalities. This work builds on extensive collaboration with partners in recent years. This will be formalised and will start with a focus on anti-racism. From this, we have identified the shared areas we will want to progress together.

- Outcomes and data and insight / lived experience
- Service design
- Developing leadership culture and workforce
- Accountability
- Resident engagement and collaboration

#### 6.22. Anti-racism Framework Objectives

The anti-racism framework objectives reflect the Equality Plan objectives. They were developed first and influence the wider objectives.

1. Identify and eradicate racism and racial inequality at every life stage by taking protective, preventative and positive action (as well as an equitable approach)
2. Build opportunity and wellbeing; ensuring a focus on racial equity
3. Celebrate and serve diverse communities and value the contribution they make
4. Embed anti-racism into service plans and practice across the council and the borough.
5. Change as an institution: the leadership and management culture and diversity of leadership; to ensure internal and systemic change.

#### 6.23. LGBTQIA Framework thematic areas set out shared goals for the Council to work towards to become inclusive of LGBTQIA staff and residents and to eradicate inequalities. It has also influenced the emphasis in the wider Equality Plan on how we need to change as an institution and specifically the Underpinning Organisational Objectives.

- Accessibility & Service Provision
- Intersectionality
- Demographics & Data
- Informed Allyship
- Participation & Engagement
- Community Resilience & Belonging

#### 6.24. *Equality Impact Assessment*

#### 6.25. The Equality Plan is intended to have a positive impact on residents. By adopting a plan we can ensure that in Hackney we are focused on residents who are most likely to be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic or because they are socio-economically disadvantaged or belong to one of the groups we have identified as being more likely to be vulnerable. This will include residents who the Council struggles to reach through universal or traditional methods including those who are digitally excluded, have been excluded underserved by Council services and excluded by existing systems and structures making it harder for their voices to be heard or for them to “take

up the space.” These groups will inevitably have higher levels of distrust in the state.

- 6.26. The Equality Plan also considers staff who are more likely to be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic or because they are socio-economically disadvantaged or belong to one of the groups we have identified as being more likely to be vulnerable. This will include staff who are non office based staff.
- 6.27. These very groups are also the groups who are most likely to face disadvantages in being heard and influencing the Equality Plan.
- 6.28. At the outset, in the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) that went to Cabinet in July, we identified who we wanted to hear from, and have reviewed how successful we have been. We have learnt a lot from the consultation and engagement. There are some groups we did not succeed in engaging, and this assessment is detailed in the consultation report and Equality Plan. However the data suggests that the main gaps are Turkish and Kurdish communities, as well as Asian and South East Asia communities. Young people under 20 and people who are Trans or have a Trans history.
- 6.29. This has helped us to identify the priority groups who we now want to focus on as we develop the more detailed action plan and we will use a full refreshed EqIA to help us develop this plan.
- 6.30. *Sustainability and climate change*
- 6.31. The Equality Plan sets out how we tackle inequality which is a key way we can achieve social sustainability.
- 6.32. *Consultations*
- 6.33. Consultation and engagement focused on all staff, partners and residents, as all are potentially affected. We focused more on residents and staff who are more likely to be impacted by the plan because they are more likely to be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic or because they are socio-economically disadvantaged or belong to one of the groups we have identified as being more likely to be vulnerable.
- 6.34. We identified the groups who we most wanted to hear from and offered a range of ways to engage with the Equality Plan:
- Online consultation - promoted directly and by signposting
  - Convening focus groups
  - Collaborating with partners to go to meetings or groups that were already happening
  - Inviting a call for evidence and insight
- 6.35. We received 90 online responses, but engaged engagement activity involved a further 701 people: 355 staff, 239 partners and 107 residents

(of which 53 completed monitoring information).

- 6.36. We have also drawn on the insight from the 65 events that happened during the Council's anti-racist summit in October and November 2023.
- 6.37. From the Consultation and Engagement, it was clear that residents wanted to see the detailed actions below this high level plan. We will bring a full action plan back to Cabinet which draws on all the rich data and insight gathered.
- 6.38. We were asked to show how we were building on previous learning and work. The outline plan sets out how the objectives will build on existing work and also provides a summary of progress made through the last Single Equality Scheme (an update was published as part of the Corporate Plan Update in February 2022). We will also look at sharing progress in an equality hub, similar to the anti-racism hub published in 2022.
- 6.39. We received feedback that our objectives were too soft and reactive. We have used bolder and more positive language.
- 6.40. Prosperity jarred. We have amended the second objective to talk about opportunity and wellbeing.
- 6.41. There were strong views that we needed to celebrate and stand up for communities who are seen as a "problem" in society. We were urged to see community tensions and strengthen efforts to build good relations. We have strengthened the focus on this, including actions to review cohesion and how communities get on with each other.
- 6.42. There was wide support for the existing focus on institutional change and on the need for the Council to serve residents better. There was a strong ask for us to be trauma informed and to find ways to collaborate with communities in an ongoing way.
- 6.43. There was a need for more of a focus on groups who were in precarious housing situations and temporary accommodation, more comprehensive work looking at disability equality and carers, including children with special educational needs. We also needed to look at gender and sex based inequality and discrimination. We have added these are new priorities in the high level Equality Plan.
- 6.44. *Risk Assessment*
- 6.45. The main risk of adopting an Equality Plan is that it will only become more difficult to meet the commitments in the plan because the operating context becomes even more challenging with a worsening economy and increased demand on services. The main way that this risk is being managed is to be upfront in this plan about these challenges and how we need to respond.



- 6.46. On balance, there are more strategic and reputational risks from not adopting an Equality Plan. As the operating context continues to be challenging, unpredictable and complex, we need to be very purposeful and planned and informed by the best understanding of key inequalities. This will help us avoid reactive responses to issues or concerns raised by residents or equality groups about equality impacts.

## **7. Comments of the Interim Group Director, Finance**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. Financial implications as a result of adopting the Equality Plan or the associated frameworks will be addressed via the normal council budget setting and resource allocation processes and will need to be met within existing resources.

## **8. Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services**

- 8.1. Part 2, Article 4.8(c) of the Constitution states that the Equalities Statement (now Equality Plan) is a Discretionary (as decided by Full Council) part of the Policy Framework. Part 2, Article 4.7(b) of the Constitution states that approving or adopting the policy framework is a function of Full Council only.
- 8.2. In addition, Part 4, Section C (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules), paragraph 2.1 sets out the process for developing the framework. The information in this Report is presented pursuant to such process and therefore Cabinet is authorised to approve the approach proposed and the matters in paragraph 3.1 of this Report
- 8.3. The approval of all corporate policies and strategies and all formal service strategies is reserved to the Mayor and Cabinet under the Mayor's Scheme of Delegation and therefore Cabinet will be authorised to approve the full action plan for the Equality Plan and the Equality and Cohesion Policy when brought to Cabinet later this year as described in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 of this Report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Equality Plan

Appendix 2: the anti-racism Framework

Appendix 3: the LGBTQIA framework.

Appendix 4: [Consultation and Engagement Report](#)

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