

**REPORT TO:** CABINET

**DATE:** 17 JUNE 2021

**TITLE:** EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY POLICY

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR RUSSELL PERRIN, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

**LEAD OFFICER:** SIMON HILL, HEAD OF GOVERNANCE (01279) 446099

**This is not a Key Decision**  
**It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I012482**  
**Call-in Procedures may apply**  
**This decision will affect no ward specifically.**

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- A** The Equality and Diversity and Inclusivity Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.
- B** Through the Officer Equality Working Group, the Council looks at what 'inclusivity' means for Harlow and develops the Action Plan further to reflect this.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

- A** To enable the Council to more effectively comply with its legislative requirements surrounding equality and diversity.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Council has a number of legislative requirements that it must comply with, including those set out within the Equality Act 2010. The Council already has a number of policies and procedures which enable it to meet the requirements placed upon it by the Public Sector Equality Duty created by the Act.
2. The Council already has an Equality Policy which was most recently updated in March 2018. The current Policy is limited in scope and only covers the Council's legal requirements.

## ISSUES/PROPOSALS

3. The revised Equality and Diversity and Inclusivity Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, creates a more robust Policy which goes beyond legal requirements. The Policy sets out three key objectives, which are that:
  - a) The Council's services are accessible to everyone and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable ground;
  - b) The Council's services seek to meet the needs of our customers and local communities can influence our services; and
  - c) Equality and diversity is championed within the Council and our workforce, at all levels, is representative of the local community.
4. To achieve these objectives, an Equality Action Plan has been created (attached as Appendix A) to the Policy. This sets out a number of actions which are accountable to a 'lead officer' within the Council.
5. This will be a working document and will therefore be updated so the Council can continue to make progress against three objectives listed above, in addition to creating flexibility to respond to any emerging challenges or changes in legislation.
6. As set out in Appendix D to the Policy, there would be a process for determining whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) needs to be undertaken. EIAs are not a legal requirement but will provide greater confidence that the Council is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty.
7. An annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Information report will be produced to allow for monitoring towards the equality and diversity objectives and the action plan.

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)**

The new policy will be used within the Environment & Planning Team to better inform the potential impact of particular services upon sections of the Harlow population.

**Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning**

### **Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)**

None specific.

**Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive**

### **Housing**

As contained in the report.

**Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

**Community Wellbeing**

As contained within the report.

**Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing**

**Governance (Includes HR)**

As contained in the report.

**Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance**

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Equality and Diversity Policy

**Background Papers**

None.

**Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

EIA – Equality Impact Assessment