

Appendix A - Harlow's Equality Action Plan

Key Considerations:

- Our role as a Service Provider – ensuring that the Council's services meet the needs of all local people and that people can access our services on an equal basis.
- Our role as an Employer – ensuring that the workforce is representative of the community, the recruitment processes are fair and that the work environment is safe and free from discrimination.
- Our role as a Community Leader – ensuring that the Council leads on promoting equality and inclusivity within the Town to improve the quality of life for the residents and businesses of Harlow.

Objective 1: Our services are accessible to everyone and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable ground

Number:	Action	Reason for Action	Steps to be taken for action to be achieved	What is the desired end state? What realistically can be achieved?	Recommendations from Internal Audit (if any)	Responsibility	Original Target Timescales
1.1	The Decision Making Tree process (Appendix D) is followed when dealing with service provision, policies, procedures, functions and projects where the PSED is a significant factor and Equality Impact Assessment Forms completed when necessary (Appendix D)	Ensures that decision making is open, transparent and fair and takes into account the diversity of the Town, ensuring equalities are incorporated	The Decision Making Tree process is approved and made available on council website for officer use. Process to also be incorporated into committee report templates with the completed Decision Making Tree document attached to relevant committee report.	That the key characteristics are fairly treated so services can be accessed fairly	In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Council should develop a consistent and proportionate procedure for assessing and recording the equalities impacts of policies (using an EIA or other agreed methodology) to be completed before a proposed policy is adopted.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
1.2	Ensures the Council's procurement activities promote and further equality of opportunity in line with PSED guidance	Fulfilling the PSED in relation to its supply base	This is defined in stage 3 of the Harlow Council Procurement Framework			Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
1.3	All Committee reports demonstrate that the equalities duties have been considered and the EIA included in the reported if necessary	Members and Managers are informed about the equality impacts of the decisions they are being asked to make	An "equality and diversity" implication is added to the committee report template for consideration	In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Council should develop a consistent and proportionate procedure for assessing and recording the equalities impacts of policies (using an EIA or other agreed methodology) to be completed before a proposed policy is adopted.	In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Council should develop a consistent and proportionate procedure for assessing and recording the equalities impacts of policies (using an EIA or other agreed methodology) to be completed before a proposed policy is adopted.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	May-21
1.4	Ensure Council documents, reports, policies and procedures are written in Plain English with standards regarding font size and accessible standards	To ensure that documents can be accessed and understood by all	Deliver "report writing and plain english writing" training to officers who write reports	To ensure that documents can be accessed and understood by all		Head of Service and Lead Officer	Jul-21
1.5	Ensure the Council's procurement activities in relation to Modern Slavery further equality of opportunity in line with PSED guidance	Fulfilling the PSED in relation to its supply base	As part of the Council procurement process investigate further the Home Office Modern Slavery Assessment Tool (MSAT) as a potential mechanism to assess the risks of modern slavery in the supply base			Head of Service and Lead Officer	Jul-21
1.6	Provide customers with access to a translation and alternative format service e.g. video	Equality of Opportunity is advanced for those accessing Council information and services	Braille, sign language, translation of key documents	All Council information is available in format required for access to council services and advice	A review of document accessibility should be carried out as and the information regarding how to access these should be prominently publicised on the Council's website.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Dec-21
1.7	investigate including the translation and alternative format strapline on all publications relating to information and services provided by the Council and review the translation options in this strapline annually	All customers can benefit from Council information and services	Braille, sign language, translation of key documents	As above	A review of document accessibility should be carried out as and the information regarding how to access these should be prominently publicised on the Council's website.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Dec-21

1.8	Review the use of translation and alternative format services to establish if documents are accessible on screen readers for the visually impaired	A better understanding of the communication needs of customers can be obtained and services adapted to make them more inclusive if needed	Braille, sign language, translation of key documents	As above	A review of document accessibility should be carried out as and the information regarding how to access these should be prominently publicised on the Council's website.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Dec-21
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Objective 2: Our services seek to meet the needs of our customers and local communities can influence our services

Number:	Action	Reason for Action	Steps to be taken for action to be achieved	What is the desired end state? What realistically can be achieved?	Recommendations from Internal Audit (if any)	Responsibility	Original Target Timescales
2.1	Clearly publish and promote any comments or compliments received and the complaints process and positively encourage our customers to use the system	Customers have awareness of the complaints process and the means of raising equality issues through this process	Complaint process is already available on website. Review complaints procedure to ensure PSED is considered when dealing with complaints.	A process for reviewing complaints should be developed which can then address any equalities issues arising.	A process for reviewing complaints should be developed which can then address any equalities issues arising.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
2.2	Respond to and ensure positive and proactive learning from complaints	Appropriate changes made to services to reflect needs of service users	Review complaints procedure to ensure the Council considers what it has learnt from the complaint.	A process for reviewing complaints should be developed which can then address any equalities issues arising.	A process for reviewing complaints should be developed which can then address any equalities issues arising.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
2.3	Develop a central database of local community groups which is reviewed annually for officers to access when planning consultation activity	To ensure that the Council receives a wide range of feedback on its services and proposals for service and policy developments	Discuss with teams across the Council as to who they already consult with. Compile database of all groups who should be consulted with. This would be a fluid, long term document which could be reviewed annually.	Gather information on the socio economic breakdown of Harlow so services can be accessed fairly		Head of Service and Lead Officer	Jul-21
2.4	Involve the Residents and the Youth Council in the development of Council services	To ensure that the Council receives a wide range of feedback on its services and proposals for service and policy developments	Use central database of local community groups to consult with local residents. Develop a consultation framework to agree what matters the Council should regularly consult on. Consider resurrection of the resident survey.	Consultations cover all characteristics so services can be accessed fairly		Head of Service and Lead Officer	Jul-21
2.5	Continue to develop the Council's information base in terms of the socio-economic profile of the District and publish this information annually in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Information Report	To ensure that the Council has a robust knowledge of the socio-economic breakdown of the District which can be used to underpin service and policy development	Consider resurrection of the resident survey. Information could be published in annual information report.	Gather information on the socio economic breakdown of Harlow so services can be accessed fairly		Head of Service and Lead Officer	Dec-21

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Objective 3: Equality and diversity is championed within the Council and our workforce, at all levels, is representative of the local community

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3.1	Publish the Human Resources policies that have been subject to Equality and Diversity review	To ensure that Council Human Resources policies are not discriminatory and equality and diversity is championed within the Council	Documents to be published on website and reviewed annually.		The Council's 'Equality Policy on Inclusion and Diversity' should be reviewed as a priority by the EWG and updated in line with best practice (to incorporate, for example, roles and responsibilities, and review and reporting arrangements). The policy should be published on the Kaonet and the Council's website, and reviewed annually by the EWG to ensure it remains current.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
3.2	Publish gender pay gap information on the website	To show if there is a difference in the average pay between all men and women in the Council's workforce and identify if action needs to be taken to reduce or eradicate this	Gender pay gap information is already collated by Human Resources. Publish report on website.		The Council's 'Equality Policy on Inclusion and Diversity' should be reviewed as a priority by the EWG and updated in line with best practice (to incorporate, for example, roles and responsibilities, and review and reporting arrangements). The policy should be published on the Kaonet and the Council's website, and reviewed annually by the EWG to ensure it remains current.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
3.3	Report annually on the overall performance of the Council including progress of the Equality Action Plan	Ensures that the senior management members of the Council are aware of any equality issues within the Council and encouraged to ensure that the Council promotes equality in respect of its role as a service provider, employer and community leader	Publish annual information report to detail action undertaken throughout the year by the Council. Include section on progress of the Equality Action Plan		To comply with the PSED the Council should publish annually its equality objectives and the progress made towards achieving them. This could be achieved through the publication of an Equalities Annual Report. To enable progress to be evaluated, targets should be assigned to the actions, the action plan monitored by the EWG, and progress reported to the Corporate Governance Group to update the risk register.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	Apr-21
3.4	Training on the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's approach to equality and diversity is provided to Councillors	Members are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that decision making takes into account the diversity of the town whilst ensuring that equalities are incorporated so the Council meets its PSED	Training to be included in the induction process for new Councillors. Periodic training would need to be offered to act as a refresher for existing Councillors (could be offered through Wisenet/online system)		Completion of the equality and diversity e-learning course should be monitored by the EWG and reported as part of the action plan progress report. The process for assessing and recording the equalities impacts of policies (using an EIA or other agreed methodology) should be clearly communicated as part of tailored training for staff and Members.	Head of Service and Lead Officer	May-21

3.5	Carry out an annual workforce analysis	To ensure the Council has up to date information on its workforce profile and that its workforce is representative of the local community that it serves	Conduct research into approaches taken by other Local Authorities. Create a staff survey.			Head of Service and Lead Officer	Sep-21
3.6	All staff complete Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness training. This can form part of the induction process for new Councillors and introduce periodic refresher training for existing Councillors	Staff understand equality and diversity, the protected characteristics groups, the different forms of prohibited conduct and discrimination and the duties required under the Equality Act 2010	Training to be arranged by Human Resources (could be offered through Wisnet/online system). Training would have to be offered regularly to pick up new starters and act as a refresher for existing officers			Head of Service and Lead Officer	Sep-21