


<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	28 September 2022
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Leanne Feeley – Executive Member (Education, Achievement and Equalities)
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tracy Brennand – Assistant Director (People and Workforce Development)
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>EQUALITIES STRATEGY</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>This report seeks permission to consult on a new Equalities Strategy with the existing one expiring this year.</p> <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 the Local Authority has a duty to publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years.</p> <p>This draft Strategy has been developed using an LGA self-assessment tool, advice from an independent review of our approach to Equalities in Tameside Council, consultation with the Partnership Engagement Network, Reports delivered through the Inequalities Reference Group and a review of equalities data available within the Local Authority.</p> <p>It is proposed that this draft Strategy forms the basis of an Action Plan owned and delivered by an Officer Group which will report to the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>Proposal is that this draft Strategy be taken through a six-week consultation exercise.</p>
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve the consultation plan for the proposed strategy.
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Equality and diversity work is relevant to all Corporate Plan priorities
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The issues highlighted in the report directly relate to meeting the requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010, and aid compliance with legislative and performance management frameworks.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any policy decisions that arise as a result of the Equalities Strategy will need to be subject to separate reports and financial consideration.
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	The legal implications are contained in the main body of the report. It would be helpful if for the benefit of SLT further information is provided as to why 6 weeks is sufficient for the consultation period as the advised period is 12 weeks.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	This report fulfils the commitment for equalities issues to be monitored on a regular basis by Executive Cabinet. It also ensures awareness of the agenda across the organisation
<b>Background Information:</b>	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Tom Hoghton – Policy & Strategy Service Manager

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed response to our statutory duty to publish measurable equality objectives for the next four years in the form of a draft Equality Strategy (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.2 We seek permission to go out to consultation on the draft strategy for a period of six weeks.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The public sector equality duty is laid out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It came into force on 5 April 2011, and it states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act; b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 2.2 The Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 stated that by January 2012, and annually thereafter, public bodies must publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, including information about the protected characteristic status of employees, and other persons affected by our policies and practices. By April 2012, public bodies were also required to publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years from the date of first publication. The 2011 Regulations were replaced by The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 in March 2017.
- 2.3 Our previous iteration to meet this duty was the One Equality Scheme, which was published jointly by the Council and CCG, ran from 2018-2022. With the move from CCG to the Integrated Care System the Council must, once again and the expiry of the previous scheme the time is right to pursue a new set of Objectives.

## 3. APPROACH TO EVIDENCE

- 3.1 In developing the Strategy we undertook the following:
  - Equality Framework for Local Government – A Self-Assessment Tool benchmarking against good practice nationwide. We intend to repeat this process annually and explore the option of an independent assessment by the LGA.
  - All Equals Charter - We also recently funded an independent assessment by Manchester Pride called the All Equals Charter where they looked at systems, paperwork and physical infrastructure we have in place. We achieved a 'role model' accreditation which is the highest they offer but they also identified a number of issues which we have incorporated into the Strategy.
  - Partnership Engagement Network (PEN) - On 26 July we held a PEN conference where we took the Equalities Strategy for discussion and were able to capture views of attendees on our approach to equalities and what else we need to do to address these issues.
  - Inequalities Reference Group - Another great source of evidence for the Strategy has been the work of this group and the various reports and recommendations that have been produced. Again, this has added further evidence and weight to the Strategy

- Data - We have a wealth of evidence around equalities. From information produced by services to all of the equalities data produced through the various consultations we undertake. It provides some really useful insight into how accessible and visible we are as a Council.

#### **4. CHANGES TO THE STRATEGY**

4.1 The key changes from the previous Strategy to this one include:

- The previous Strategy was a joint between Council and CCG
- We incorporated the findings of an independent assessment of our approach
- We have made a greater commitment to more robust monitoring of our performance in the relation to equalities than previously, including our approach to Equality Impact Assessments
- We want to go further in addressing barriers to accessing services than previously and meaningfully respond to the comments received through consultation and engagement about accessibility.
- We want to instil an organisational culture and practice of acceptance of different staff needs and requirements through a variety of mechanisms including celebrating diversity.
- Finally, and most importantly, the previous strategy had no governance behind it to monitor delivery.

4.2 **Appendix 1** is the draft plan itself

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

5.1 Consultation - 6 weeks public consultation on the document, which is a proportionate and appropriate length given the consultation already undertaken through the Partnership Engagement Network, the fact that it's a pre-existing scheme and that we have used the equalities monitoring we already do across every piece of engagement to inform this Strategy.. Consultation will involve presenting the draft strategy and inviting comments on its sufficiency and content.

5.2 The outcome of the consultation will then be fed back to Members by way of a further Cabinet report .

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 As set out at the top of the report.