

# REPORT FOR DECISION



<b>DECISION OF:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>2 MARCH 2016</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EQUALITY STRATEGY</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	Councillor Sandra Walmsley Cabinet Member for Resources and Regulation
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Tracy Murphy Assistant Director – Resources and Regulation (HR & OD)
<b>TYPE OF DECISION:</b>	Executive
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:</b>	This paper is within the public domain
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	<p>This report provides the Cabinet with details of the Council’s proposed <b>Equality Strategy 2016-2020</b>. The Strategy includes the Council’s equality vision, objectives, and policy. It also sets out a framework and decision making structure in relation to equality matters.</p> <p>The Strategy is in line with our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>It will replace the existing Equality Strategy 2012-2016.</p>
<b>OPTIONS &amp; RECOMMENDED OPTION</b>	That the Council adopts the proposed Equality Strategy and equality objectives, to remain compliant with equalities legislation.
<b>IMPLICATIONS:</b>	
<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes

<p><b>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</b></p>	<p>The Strategy will be delivered within existing budgets.</p> <p>Failure to adopt the Equality Strategy would mean the Council was in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This would leave us open to legal challenge or the risk of the EHRC taking us to a judicial review.</p>
<p><b>Statement by Interim Executive Director of Resources &amp; Regulation (including Health and Safety Implications)</b></p>	<p>There are no health and safety implications, beyond that of supporting the Council's approaches for tackling unwanted behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Equality/Diversity implications:</b></p>	<p>Yes – positive impact on equality  (see paragraph below)</p>
<p><b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>As well as bringing together a number of different pieces of legislation, the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities and its broader purpose is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of such bodies. 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. It is a further requirement to set equality objectives.</p> <p>The Equality Strategy 2016 to 2020 details the Council's commitment to meet those legal obligations.</p>
<p><b>Wards Affected:</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>Scrutiny Interest:</b></p>	<p>Internal Scrutiny</p>

**TRACKING/PROCESS****INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
1.2.16			
Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	
	2.3.16		

**1.0 BACKGROUND****1.1 Legal Context**

- The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 providing a single legal framework to more effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination. It included new protected equality characteristics and forms of prohibited conduct.
- The Act also has an associated Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies, such as the Council, to have due regard for the following aims in all that it does:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
  - Foster good relations between different groups
- In particular, we are also required to publish a number of equality objectives which must be specific and measurable.

**1.2 Development of the Equality Strategy**

- The Equality Strategy 2016-2020 is based on the current Equality Strategy 2012-2016, but has been revised and condensed.
- It includes the Council's equality vision, policy and objectives.
- It also sets out a framework which will ensure we remain compliant with equalities legislation and which will also help us to achieve our equality vision of *'an inclusive society which values and embraces people's different needs, abilities, situations and goals, and promotes fair opportunities for people to live and flourish in the way that they would choose'*

**1.3 Development of the Equality Objectives**

- The Council's equality objectives were developed in line with our corporate Vision, Priorities and Outcomes.
- Research was carried out into the equality information held by the Council and objectives were chosen which would help us to tackle some key issues.
- Consultation upon these was carried out via the Corporate Diversity Team, Employee Groups and UNISON.

- The objectives are:
  - We will take action to tackle and reduce unwanted behaviour in both our workplace and our schools
  - We will reduce the amount of unknown equality data we hold on our employees
  - We will work to digitally include more of our employees

## **2.0 ISSUES**

### **2.1 Risk Management**

- Failure to adopt the Equality Strategy would mean the Council was in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This would leave us open to legal challenge or the risk of the EHRC taking us to a judicial review.
- There are no health and safety implications, beyond that of supporting the Council's approaches for tackling unwanted behaviour.

### **2.2 Equality and Diversity**

- This Strategy has a positive impact on equality and diversity, as set out above.
- As well as meeting our legal requirements, the Strategy is designed to be relevant to meeting the needs of the people of Bury and supporting the vision, priorities and outcomes of the Council.

## **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council adopts the proposed Equality Strategy and Equality Objectives

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### **List of Background Papers:**

EHRC Guidance documents

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