

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2021

Report Title	THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY AND EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2025			
Purpose of Report	To approve the revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Equality Objectives for the period 2021 – 2025 following consultation. Revised policy and action plan now incorporates public consultation comments.			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES to approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Equality Objectives 2021 – 2025 following public consultation. (Appendices B and C to this report)			
Consultation and Feedback	Appendix A details organisations invited to take part in the public consultation			
Report Author	Sarah Turner, Senior Policy and Governance Officer Tel: Email: sarah.turner@stroud.gov.uk			
Options				
Background Papers				
Appendices	Appendix A – Details of organisations invited to public consultation Appendix B – Revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021 – 2025 Appendix C – Revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan – September 2021 Appendix D – Public consultation questions and responses Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Council approved the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy Equality action plan in March 2021 and agreed that we would go out to public consultation to ensure that the views of local residents and communities were considered in the development of the Equality action plan.
- 1.2 The EDI Policy sets out the Council's commitment to achieving the main aims of the Equality Act 2010 and to demonstrate how the Council, when carrying out its functions, will have due regard to the public sector equality duty and the need to:

- 1.2.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the equality legislation;
 - 1.2.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
 - 1.2.3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 1.3 A protected characteristic under the Act is any of the following: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.4 The EDI Policy incorporates the requirements to publish Equality Objectives which address the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The public consultation was opened on the 7 July 2021 and available on the council's website for 8 weeks closing on 1 September. The consultation was launched with a Council press release and promoted on social media. The consultation was promoted widely to voluntary and community organisations and Appendix A lists over 100 organisations who were invited to directly respond to the consultation.
- 2.2 The Council places on record its thanks to those individuals and groups who took the time to respond to the consultation.
- 2.3 There was a limited response to the consultation, however, it should be noted that many of the responses received were submitted by community groups who had consulted with their individual members and responded on their behalf.

2.4 TABLE OF RESPONSES

The detailed consultation responses are included at Appendix D. The table below shows some headline information relating to the questions asked as part of the consultation.

- 41.6% agreed that the EDI policy is clear, understandable, and includes what the Council is trying to achieve.
 - 45.83% agreed that the Council has identified appropriate commitments, although 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 20.83 neither agreed or disagreed.
 - 56.53% agreed or strongly agrees that the EDI policy promotes equality and good relations.
 - 54.17% agreed that the Council's policy objectives are specific and focus on the biggest equality challenges facing the Council
- 2.5 The EDI Working Group have carefully considered all responses received and as there were no substantive amendments proposed to the content, the Working Group has recommended that no further changes will be made to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Appendix B. Some of the consultation responses focused on the delivery actions and the Working Group have instead recommended that a number of suggestions made are incorporated into the EDI Action Plan. Appendix D outlines the response to questions and comments or suggestions made and how these will be included into our action plan and taken forward.

2.6 The most notable theme identified in the responses is the need to engage and work with community groups to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Working in partnership is at the heart of advancing equality and eliminating discrimination and the EDI Working Group have identified the need to demonstrate real commitment, meaningfully consult, listen to and work with community groups such as Stroud Against Racism and Stroud District Youth Council. We will continue to build relationships and ensure that partnership working is embedded in the Action Plan for 2022/23.

3. CONCLUSION

Appendix C outlines the progress made against the EDI Action Plan for 2021/22. Responses to the consultation will inform the Action Plan for 2022/23 which will be reported to Council for approval in Spring 2022.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

The Council's proposed Equality Objectives are currently anticipated to be delivered within the existing budgets for each service area and therefore create no additional financial implications for the council.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager
Tel: 01453 754343 Email: lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk

4.2 Legal Implications

Approval of the publication of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Equality Objectives will ensure the Council is seeking to be compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty provided by section 149 of that Act.

One Legal
Tel: 01684 272691 Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

4.3 Equality Implications

The Council has statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality. The Council also has a specific duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people. The Council's proposed EDI Policy and Equality Objectives help the Council to address the causes of inequality and promote fairness and inclusion across all its functions.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix E).

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.