

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2021/22 working towards our EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2021 - 2025

The Equality Act 2010 contains a General Duty which requires Local Authorities to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

It covers people who share the ‘protected characteristics’ of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act also contains an integrated Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires all public bodies to consider the needs of protected groups when designing and delivering services.

Our Action Plan and Objectives set out how we will meet our statutory obligations under this duty and how we plan to go further than those obligations to ensure that local communities and stakeholders identify the organisation as being equality focused, diversity driven and inclusion minded.

1. Communities: Listen and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone				
ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	SERVICE AREA	OUTCOME	PROGRESS TO DATE
1.1 a. Consult on the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Objectives once approved by Council. b. Improve visibility of the equality data and intelligence held about the District’s population and make it more widely available	June 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality data on the district is readily available, widely used by services and clearly presented on our website. • Infographics used to display the data on the Council’s website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Policy and objectives are being presented to Council on 18th March. Full consultation is planned for after the May elections. • The Council has an ongoing agreement with GCC to produce equality information at a district, ward and parish level. • https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/ • Infographics for each District Ward are being developed to be published in April 2021. • Work is being undertaken to present equality data and information clearly on our website.

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1.2 Review what equality data is collected across key service areas to ensure appropriate data is available e.g. to inform Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).	July 2021	Policy & Governance /Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services are using equality data to inform key decisions, policies and services delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the Equality & Diversity training provided to all staff, Equality Champions have come forward across the organisation. The complaints process is currently under review to include equality monitoring.
1.3 Establish how we can capture anecdotal and local knowledge more effectively to increase our understanding of the needs of our communities.	Sept 2021	Equality Working Group (EWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms are in place to capture equality issues raised by Councillors. Service areas understand the needs of particular equality groups and use the findings to inform the development of Council services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning shared through Local Strategic Partnership; Parish & Town Council forums; Community Hubs; Neighbourhood Wardens. The Equality Working Group are working with members of the BAME community on initiatives to tackle racism and inequality across the district. Following a meeting with SAR improvements are being made to our Complaints procedure to introduce equality monitoring and provide additional training to complaint handlers.
1.4 Establish a Residents Panel to provide a structured forum for inclusive engagement.	Sept 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council services are accessible to everyone and meet the specific needs of our communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper prepared on the formation of a Citizens' Panel which is to be developed into a Community Engagement Strategy. Working with Health and Wellbeing team to compile list of community groups in the district and groups representing the protected characteristics across the district. Officers working with Community Hubs invited to be members of the Equality Working Group.
1.5 Work with local partners and community groups to support and organise events to celebrate the different communities that live in the district	Ongoing	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district's diverse communities feel recognised, included and engaged with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council currently uses our website, social media platforms and intranet to publicise notable dates such as Black History Month and LGBTQ+ to promote equality and diversity.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENEI produces a notable dates calendar which will help us achieve this. • In January 2021 we worked with Cheltenham BC to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.
1.6 Improve digital access to Council services.	2021-22	Strategic Director of Transformation & Change and ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services can be accessed conveniently by all of our service users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernisation programme is well underway and a digital platform for the Council is being procured. • The Council’s complaints procedure is under review.
1.7 Support wider community consultation and engagement with the Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a baseline of current consultation. Produce accessible engagement and consultation guidelines for services. 	October 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement with our residents, tenants and service users. • Our communities feel listened to and able to participate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations are published on the Councils website: https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-the-council/have-your-say/consultations • Community Access is a key Workstream in the Modernisation Programme and will develop a Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy.
1.8 Investigate the extent and impact of bullying on young people in our community	September 2021	Youth Service and Youth Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are encouraged to speak out about bullying and policies and procedures to tackle bullying are improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Council have designed and conducted an in-depth survey of young people in the district, which received 873 responses and is being analysed by the young people themselves.

1. Communities: Specific to Black Lives Matter				
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1.8 Undertake a review of existing anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies and practices, including the training it provides to members and staff and to take action to strengthen these as required.	September 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective policies and procedures are in place to combat racism and all forms of discrimination. • Awareness raising amongst elected members by using examples of lived experience from people from the local BAME community. 	Following the May 2021 elections the Member induction programme will include anti-racism and anti-discrimination training, including local examples from the district's community.
1.9 Engage proactively with public and private sector service providers operating across Stroud District, including care providers, education providers, police, and Town and Parish Councils to encourage a joined-up approach to eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination.	Ongoing	Chief Executive & Leader All services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a joined-up approach to eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings have taken place with Gloucester City and Gloucestershire County Council discuss joint working in relation to equality and diversity. • The Chief Executive and Leader are members of Stroud's Local Strategic Partnership
1.10 Take positive steps to educate ourselves and our communities about all forms of racism and discrimination. This should include giving greater visibility to: a) the continuous presence of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents in	Ongoing	Equality Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better understanding of our diverse communities and improved community cohesion. • Increase in the percentage of residents responding positively to the Annual Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's BAME group celebrated Black History Month in October 2020 by sharing their experiences and celebrating their heroes on the Council's Intranet. • The Council's Annual Budget Survey 2020 asked residents to what extent they agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together, 70% agreed (16% definitely agree and

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<p>our District, who have contributed to our communities over at least 300 years.</p> <p>b) the probable role of past Stroud District residents in profiting from the slave trade and colonial exploitation.</p> <p>c) the positive role of past residents in opposing slavery and other forms of exploitation.</p>			<p>Survey question ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together’.</p>	<p>54% tend to agree). However, just under 1 in 10 (9%) disagreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENEI delivered equality and diversity training to all staff which included unconscious bias tests for Members and the Leadership & Management Team.
<p>1.11 Undertake a review and community consultation, in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils, of any street and building names, statues and architectural features that may be considered offensive; this is likely to include the Black Boy House and Black Boy Clock with its sculpture in Stroud Town.</p>	<p>September 2021</p>	<p>Equality Working Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where removal or name change is not considered necessary, there may be opportunities for using such examples for education purposes to make our past, with its positive and negative features, more visible and accessible to the current population through appropriate interpretation materials and educational visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for the review of Black Boy Clock has been agreed by the Strategic & Leadership Team and Group Leaders. EWG are working on the details of the process. • A report on the significance of the Statue has been drafted by the Specialist Conservation Officer. • The specification for the Review Panel has been drafted and recruitment is being undertaken for two Community Representatives to join the Review Panel. • The Review will commence in May 2021.

2. Leadership and Organisational Commitment: Actively champion our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle inequality together				
ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	SERVICE AREA	OUTCOME	PROGRESS TO DATE
2.1 Set objectives within the revised Equality and Diversity Policy and identify measures so that overall progress can be assessed annually.	August 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Council’s equality and diversity objectives is monitored and reported in line with the Public sector equality duty. Annual report to committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy to go to Council for approval in March 2021. • Objectives and Action Plan to be approved by Council and reviewed annually. • Public consultation on the objectives to take place following the May elections.
2.2 Review the equality information published to ensure we are meeting the public sector equality duty.	April 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality information is used to improve service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality information presented to the Equality Working Group and to be published on the Council’s website once approved by Full Council.
2.3 Consider (‘pay due regard’ to) how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.	June 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of social-economic impact is included as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of ‘Rurality’ forms part of the EIA process and will be extended to wider socio-economic impact.
2.3 Identify the current level of equality monitoring with a view to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process across reports Review EIA guidance and training. Improve monitoring of compliance. 	June 2021	Policy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All council decisions are made taking full account of the impact on all relevant protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage. • All EIAs are published on the Council’s website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An EIA section has been incorporated into the Committee report template. • EIA template and guidance is available on the Hub and support is provided by the Policy and Performance Officer.

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d. Include consideration of Socio-economic disadvantage				
2.4 Enhance the equality training element of the Member Development Programme	June 2021	Policy & Governance and Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members have an understanding of the Equality Act and a greater understanding of cultural differences within local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory Equality & Diversity training provided in June 2020 and further cultural awareness and unconscious bias training during July 2020. A new programme will be in place following the elections in 2021, including training on the appropriate use of social media.
2.5 Organisational Development work – Shared values and behaviours	Ongoing	Ascend OD Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a ‘One Council’ culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of 121s and staff workshops have been held and the findings have been presented to the ‘Proud of Stroud’ staff forum.
2.6 TIDE self-assessment tool	March - April 2021	Policy & Governance /HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with ENEI to review the Council and to gauge Equalities across the Council and what we need to do to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with ENEI to monitor progress against the assessment tool.

3. Workforce: Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected				
ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	SERVICE AREA	OUTCOME	PROGRESS TO DATE
3.1 Recruitment training for staff involved, to cover the Equality Act, unconscious bias, positive action,	May 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure we have an unbiased recruitment process where all staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with ENEI to identify a suitable training package.

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genuine occupational requirement etc			involved understand their responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training was delivered to all Council staff on 'Inclusive Culture & the Role We Play' which included a segment on Unconscious bias • Face to Face training was delivered to all Managers on 'Inclusive Culture & Leadership' and all managers have completed Unconscious Bias e-learning.
3.2 To work with Zellis – Recruitment /Onboarding Module to analyse Equality data	April 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure we are attracting candidates from under-represented groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently working with Zellis to design Recruitment Module and in the future to develop a system to record the data. • Have recently advertised a post using the new Recruitment Portal with the plan to roll this out for all jobs in the Spring 2021.
3.3 Work with service units to identify Positive Action Opportunities for the BAME group, Women into Management, People with Disabilities, LGBTQ+ and people in the Stroud Community who have lost their job due to COVID-19	Ongoing	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin to address the imbalance from under-represented groups within the Council. • To help the local economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralisation of the Apprenticeship budget has allowed us to work across the Council and identify suitable opportunities. • HR have presented to the Leadership and Management Team to promote the developed Apprenticeship scheme including plans to promote positive action opportunities.
3.4 Ensure that all interview questions have an Equalities Question for all candidates	Jan-March 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the question at interviews reinforces to the candidate how important Equalities is in the Council. It's also an opportunity to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards developing standard questions for each grades: • Apprentice - Stroud 2 • Stroud 3 - 4 • Stroud 5 - 7 • Stroud 8 - 9

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			gauge a candidate's understanding	
3.5 Put in place a meaningful equality training provision for staff in order to improve the learning and development of equality and diversity. Cultural Awareness Training for key staff who work directly with the Community	November 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have a better understanding of equalities and their responsibilities in the workplace and in service provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with ENEI to identify suitable course. Training has been delivered to all staff on 'Inclusive Culture & the Role We Play' which included a section on Unconscious bias. Training has been delivered to all our Managers on 'Inclusive Culture & Leadership' which included Unconscious bias e-learning course.
3.6 Identify development opportunities for BAME staff, women in management and staff with disabilities	Ongoing	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-addressing the imbalance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levy Money is available for development of staff via an Apprenticeship. HR attended a Leadership & Management team meeting to promote the use of the Levy Funds
3.7 Work Experience placement	Ongoing	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give opportunities for under-represented groups to gain an introduction to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with schools/colleges
3.8 Induction to ensure all staff participate in Equalities Training on commencing employment and to review the course to ensure its fit for purpose	March 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure we have the best course available which covers all aspects of Equalities and is interactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new starters complete a mandatory Equality & Diversity e-learning course.
3.9 Recruit Equalities Champion for each Service Unit	January 2021	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a key person in each service unit ensuring equalities is considered in all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Managers to identify suitable champions for their service unit. During the course of the Inclusive Culture & the Role we play training courses some staff have expressed an interest in volunteering for being

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			aspects of their service work	an Equalities Champion. HR and Ascend are currently working on the Organisational & Development Project and they are also keen to have Champions. A joined up approach is to be developed.