

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Corporate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Overview	3
2.1 Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Equality Duty	3
2.2 Protected Characteristics	4
2.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Practice	4
2.4 Mainstreaming Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	5
3. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Priorities	5
3.1 EP1: Listen to and learn from communities that we serve.....	5
3.2 EP2: Deliver accessible and inclusive services, facilities and information that meet diverse needs of communities.	5
3.3 EP3: Providing leadership, a strong organisational commitment, and collaborative partnerships to actively promote equality.	6
3.4 EP4: Strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to a culture that values difference, where all staff feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed and thrive.	6
4. Monitoring and Evaluation	7

1. Introduction

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan outlines Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's continued commitment and ambitions to embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion across its services and for its workforce over the next four years. This plan will outline our clear vision for an inclusive council, this includes the work of councillors in the community, the provision of services, work with partner organisations and the development of the council's workforce.

It provides a comprehensive picture of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion priorities along with activities on how these priorities will be progressed and monitored over the period of this plan. It also demonstrates the work that the council is doing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below for more information).

The council's overarching Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement is: 'The council strives to advance equality, eliminate discrimination, build strong community relations and deliver accessible services that meet the needs of everyone in the borough.'

The equality, diversity and inclusion work carried out by the council goes beyond meeting legal duties and is aimed at making the borough a place where everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

This plan is for residents and visitors, partners and stakeholders, council employees, councillors and all others acting on behalf of the council, including contractors and volunteers. We recognise that all people are individual, and that their needs can be complex and varied. We are confident that this plan and our yearly action plan sets out how we aspire to achieve real and lasting progress for diverse groups and individuals alongside everyone else in Basingstoke and Deane.

2. Overview

2.1 Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Equality Duty¹

The council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149). This duty includes a general duty and specific duties. The general duty requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from diverse groups; and
- foster good relations between people from diverse groups.

As a public equality duty, we are also required to publish:

¹ For more information about the Public Sector Equality Duty see: <http://tinyurl.com/3repekb>

- equality information relating to people with protected characteristics (employees, services users, and residents) every year, including reporting and publishing of gender pay gap information about our workforce.
- a clear set of equality objectives every four years setting out what we need to achieve to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

To help the council meet the general duty, there are specific duties. These require the council to publish equalities information annually and to set and publish one or more measurable equality objective/s, which will further the three aims of the Equality Duty, (every four years).

2.2 Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from being treated less favourably because of certain characteristics. These are known as ‘protected characteristics’ and include:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief (or lack of belief)
- Sexual orientation

Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, which means that the Act aims to protect everyone against unfair treatment. When considering the impact of service provision, policies and practices on diverse groups, the council also takes into account social or economic disadvantage.

2.3 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Practice

This Plan is put into practice by the following people:

- Lead Portfolio Holder - A named Councillor will have specific responsibility for equality and diversity and will champion inclusive practices and be held accountable for delivery of actions.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy Group - A group made up of councillors and senior managers who will monitor progress against equality and diversity objectives and the actions within the annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group - A cross-council officer group that meets regularly to identify and report on progress against the council’s EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) Action Plan. This includes workforce, service delivery and community relation activities.
- Our communities – Community members are vital to the delivery of our objectives and central to our overall vision. Everyone in our community has their role to play in shaping and delivering inclusion, helping us to identify inequalities and working with us to reduce or remove barriers.

- Our Partners – Partners will help us identify inequalities and provide feedback on how we can continue to reduce or remove barriers in the community, as well as identify collective actions to improve outcomes.
- Our Employees – Employees will ensure that where there is any change in service, a new policy or project, effective consultation is undertaken and the potential impacts on different people are reported and acted upon.

2.4 Mainstreaming Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

This plan will link directly to core council strategies and policies to ensure that ED&I (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) work is mainstreamed into the council's everyday business. These include the Horizon 2050 Vision and the Council Plan 2023-2027.

3. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Priorities

3.1 EP1: Listen to and learn from communities that we serve.

We will regularly engage with our communities to understand their needs. Community relationships will be strengthened, to make them partnerships based on trust and respect – where all parties are equal. This responsibility will be led by elected members and senior members of staff .

Key areas of focus include:

- a. Better understanding of who our customers are and what their needs are.
- b. Enhancing the way that we engage with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure that all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.
- c. Improving the quality of the data and information we collect and the way it is used to assess the impact of decisions.

3.2 EP2: Deliver accessible and inclusive services, facilities and information that meet diverse needs of our communities.

We will work to better understand our customers, remove barriers, and make sure all council services are accessible to all. People who use services are involved in designing services, based on their experiences and ideas. Our role is to promote a strong sense of community pride by encouraging and empowering people from all backgrounds to work together for the benefit of each other and the borough.

Key areas of focus include:

- a. Understanding and addressing barriers to accessing our services.
- b. Designing with, rather than for communities, by engaging effectively before services are developed.
- c. Strengthening equality analysis in service planning and decision making across the organisation.

3.3 EP3: Providing visible leadership, organisational commitment, and collaborative partnerships to actively promote inclusion.

It is important that our staff and our residents understand our position on equality, diversity, and inclusion and what to expect from us, both as an employer and through our service delivery. We will make this commitment clear and be accountable for it. Elected members will be equipped to act on behalf of the residents that they serve to be effective advocates and bring the voice of residents into the council. We will regularly work in partnership with key organisations and forums in the borough so local equality priorities are addressed.

Key areas of focus include:

- a. Ownership, top level commitment from council leaders and champions that will help drive the agenda throughout the council.
- b. Public awareness and accountability, clear messages that set out our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion along with clear objectives and targets that we will publicly report against.
- c. Working with partners and communities to celebrate diversity and address issues impacting residents in the borough including challenging discrimination and addressing hate crime.

3.4 EP4: Strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to a culture that values difference, where all colleagues have a sense of belonging, opportunities to succeed and thrive.

The council celebrates the benefits that a diverse workforce brings and actively works to strengthen the diversity of the workforce by creating a workplace with an inclusive culture where staff feel well supported. We will support our Councillors and staff to know more about equality matters. The council will celebrate diversity and support colleagues to feel confident about bringing their whole self to work.

Key areas of focus include:

- a. Expanding the diversity of our organisation at all levels so that our local communities are represented.
- b. Building an inclusive culture that values difference and recognises diverse skills and abilities.
- c. Supporting the health, wellbeing, development, and career progression of all colleagues.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan will be updated when there are any amendments to equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and guidance, or when there are significant changes in the local borough population profile.

The implementation of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion priorities through the Corporate Action Plan will be monitored on a regular basis and will be updated where necessary.

Equality and diversity information on the local borough population and the council workforce is published annually and is used to inform these priorities and objectives to ensure relevance and compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. For more information, please click [here](#).