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<b>PART A:</b>	<b>MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS</b>
<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>23 JUNE 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE:</b>	<b>PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND RESOURCES MARGARET WALLACE</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>PROGRESS ON THE EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide elected members with an update on the progress and delivery of the organisation's equality objectives and equality action plan as agreed by Overview and Scrutiny on the 30 September 2021.
- 1.2 A progress report is attached in (Appendix A) along with an updated action plan for 2022/23.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended to Council that:
- (i) The progress report, including a refresh of the equalities action plan for 2022/23 (Appendix A) is noted.

### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 To provide details of the work undertaken to deliver the equalities objectives over the 2021/22 financial year, together with planned actions to make further improvements moving forward.

### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS**

Equalities

4.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

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

4.2 Failure to properly impact assess, promote and improve equalities information and services could lead to the council not delivering on its obligations as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equalities Act 2020; leading to discrimination or the potential exclusion of customers.

## 5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

5.1 The councils Equality Scheme has been developed to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

5.2 The Equality Scheme, including the action plan, draws significantly upon the Local Government Equality Framework 2020, which sets out a structure for local authorities to assess and enhance their equalities position.

## REPORT

### 6.0 REPORT DETAILS

6.1 The Council's Equality Scheme required significant revision and the scheme was reviewed and aligned with the Local Government Association Equality Framework. The Overview and Scrutiny committee agreed the revision of the scheme along with the new objectives and action plan in September 2021.

6.2 In September 2021 the Council's Equality Statement set out fourteen equality objectives as follows:

- **Objective 1:** We will improve our understanding of our communities by gathering, analysing, and sharing profile data, which can be used for evidence-based decision making.
- **Objective 2:** Working with partners, we will implement the Place Standard in key localities across our district, as a means to gather information about community needs and aspirations and give communities a voice in decision making
- **Objective 3:** We will foster good community relations by increasing our active participation in EDI awareness days and partnership campaigns, and championing inclusion in democratic structures
- **Objective 4:** We will signal the Councils commitment to reducing inequality by publishing our equality policy statement
- **Objective 5:** We will reach out to partners in the voluntary and community sector and wider community to build relationships and provide an opportunity for key issues to be raised
- **Objective 6:** We will strengthen our processes to ensure that equality issues are considered in decision making processes
- **Objective 7:** We will report on and publicise progress against our objectives and equality action plan

- **Objective 8:** We will refresh our procurement and commissioning processes to take account of the diverse needs of client and ensure that providers understand the requirements of the public sector equality duty
- **Objective 9:** We will embed equality into service planning
- **Objective 10:** We will increase and improve our systems for gathering customer feedback and measuring satisfaction with our services
- **Objective 11:** We will improve our ability to communicate with members of the community who have special communication needs
- **Objective 12:** We will improve our understanding of our recruitment and workforce demographics against protected characteristics and seek to encourage successful applications from under-represented groups
- **Objective 14:** We will raise awareness of our mechanisms to support employee health and well-being issues

6.3 The Progress of the Equalities Scheme are outlined in the attached report which details the areas where progress has been made and where additional work is required. The report acknowledges that the overarching policy statement remains active and effective in defining what work needs to happen to further advance the issues of equalities across the council.

6.4 As identified in the financial strategy a new post will be recruited to support the council's commitment to tackling inequalities and to deliver on the council's 14 objectives, action plan and place-based working in 2022/23.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

As outlined in 6.123 of the Financial Strategy for 2022-26, council agreed a budget to recruit an additional post to deliver on the Council Plan priority of tackling inequalities. This will ensure the council meets its obligations as stated within the equality duty.

b) Equalities

This report details the councils overarching approach to handling equality diversity and inclusion, alongside evaluating the performance against its targets.

The measures to be introduced this year will further enhance the approach taken by the council to deliver the highest standards in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty by improving the impact assessment framework; supporting the development of community networks to tackle inequality and underrepresentation and supporting colleagues through a variety of health and wellbeing initiatives.

The content of this report has been assessed under the Council's Equality Impact Assessment process and it was determined that an EqIA was not required.

c) Health and Safety

Linked to the delivery of the equalities action plan is development of staff initiatives to support health and wellbeing. The health and safety action plan will to help ensure colleagues are supported in a variety of ways such as in helping

maintain their physical and mental health and ensuring they feel safe in their working environment. Therefore, elements of understanding the profile of colleagues in relation to disability for example, will be vital in ensuring that office premises are safe for all colleagues.

d) Crime & Disorder

The creation of the CommonPlace platform will help develop a much more user citizen centric approach to identification of areas of concern and reporting of issues that require attention by the council and its partners. It is anticipated that this platform will enhance the service offered by the council in handling and reporting against these matters.

e) Data Privacy

The organisation complies with all relevant principles of GDPR.

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**Background Papers:**  
Equalities Progress Report 2021 – 2022 (Appendix A)