



PART B: RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

**REPORT OF THE: HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGIES AND BUSINESS
TRANSFORMATION
LOUISE WOOD**

TITLE OF REPORT: EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Council approve a new equality policy statement and set of equality objectives for the organisation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) Council endorses the content of the equality policy statement and objectives, so that they may be adopted into use.
- (ii) Council notes that the policy statement and objectives form one part of the overall Equality Scheme for Ryedale District Council. The other parts of this Scheme include a detailed operational action plan (currently in draft pending approval of the policy statement and objectives) and associated operational appendices. The draft action plan will be updated following P&R and presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2021, with progress against the action plan reviewed six monthly by that Committee.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Ryedale District Council's equality scheme is now out of date. An HR policy on Equality in Employment was adopted in March 2020, nevertheless, a more holistic scheme is still required in order for the Council to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is part of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 The key strategic elements of the Equality Scheme are the policy statement, and the objectives. These determine the direction for equalities work in the Council in the period 2021 to April 2023. The input of the Policy & Resources Committee is sought on these strategic elements.
- 3.3 Once agreed, the policy statement and objectives will be operationalized through a detailed action plan, which will be reviewed through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. An action plan has already been created as a working draft, but may be adapted in line with any amends to the policy statement and objectives, as required by the Policy & Resources Committee.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 There are no significant risks associated with adopting the policy statement and objectives as set out. There is a risk that if the statement is not agreed and objectives are not set, the Council will be in breach of its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Equality Statement and objectives have been developed to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. They encompass and build upon the Equality in Employment Policy, which was adopted into use in March 2020.
- 5.2 The Equality Statement and objectives draw significantly upon the Local Government Association Equality Framework 2020, which sets out a structure for local authorities to assess and enhance their equalities position.
- 5.3 The findings of the Equalities Task Group, a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, have been fully taken into account in the drafting of the policy statement, objectives and the detailed draft action plan.
- 5.4 Staff views have also been taken into consideration in the preparation of the policy statement, objectives and draft action plan.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

6.1 The proposed equality policy statement and objectives are attached in Appendix 1.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following implications have been identified:

- a) Financial
There is no direct financial implication from the adoption of the policy statement and objectives. Any resource requirement associated with the operationalization of the objectives will be considered as part of the Financial Strategy over the next few months.
- b) Legal
Adoption and publication of the equality policy statement and objectives will bring RDC into alignment with its legal responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- c) Equalities
The purpose of the equality statement and objectives (and supporting action plan) are to enhance the Council's position and activity around the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, hence this is an expected outcome of the recommendations made in this paper.

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Background information:

LGA Equality Framework 2020 (current) version available at:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Equality%20Framework%20For%20Local%20Government%202020.pdf>

Interim report of the Scrutiny Committee Equalities Task Group available at:

<https://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/documents/s46042/Scrutiny%20Review%20Equalities.pdf>