

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

24 April 2018

TITLE:	Equality and Diversity Policy
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Tony Hall – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Forrester, Democratic & Community Service
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A: Corporate Equality Objectives 2018/19

Appendix B: Proposed Equality and Diversity Policy

1. **Reason for the Report:** To review the Council's Corporate Equality Objectives and the Corporate Equality Policy.
2. **Recommendation**
 - 2.1 To consider and comment upon the Council's Corporate Equality Objectives 2018/19 and the adoption of a revised Corporate Equality Policy.
3. **Executive Summary**
 - 3.1 In 2015 both Alliance Councils adopted a new Equality and Diversity Policy and approved Corporate Equality Objectives (which were updated in 2017).
 - 3.2 It is proposed to retain the current Equality Objectives for 2018/19 with a progress report to be published at the end of the year.
 - 3.3 As a result of monitoring legal cases which have considered the duties of public authorities under the Equality Act 2010 it is recommended that the Council revise its policy to address the findings in such cases.
4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**
 - 4.1 This report relates to the Corporate Aims:

- Provide Quality Services in Partnership with Communities.

5. Options and Analysis

- 5.1 That the Committee considers and comments on the revised Equality Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives. (Recommended)
- 5.2 That the Committee does not consider or comment on the revised Equality Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives. (Not recommended)

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Fulfilling the duties of the Equality Act 2010 will contribute to achieving increased safety for the most vulnerable within our communities.

6.2 Workforce

The Joint Equality and Diversity Policy supports the Council's approach to providing a modern and diverse workforce.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

Undertaking the actions associated with the proposed Corporate Equality Objectives will enable the Alliance Councils to meet their Equality Duties.

6.4 Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed policy and actions.

6.5 Legal

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Council to publish Equality Objectives and report on their achievement. The proposed revised Corporate Equality Policy addresses the issues arising from the decisions in legal cases considering duties under the Act.

6.6 Sustainability

None.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

The proposed Corporate Equality Objectives provide for consultation with 'protected groups'.

6.8 Risk Assessment

An effective policy and implemented plan of action will reduce the risk of poor decision making and legal challenge.

7. **Background and Detail**

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 placed a number of duties on Councils, including the duty to publish evidence of compliance with the duties in the Act and the Council's Equality Objectives.
- 7.2 In 2015 both Alliance Councils adopted a new Equality and Diversity Policy and approved Corporate Equality Objectives.
- 7.3 The Council published updated Equality Objectives in 2017. While the current objectives are not framed as outcomes the intention is that actions associated with them will lead the Council to focus on key issues for protected groups.
- 7.4 The Council's transformation programme has resulted in new systems and approaches to customer contact/ service, committee management and staff training. Introduction of these systems has been a priority and with progress on the equality actions dependent on these developments the Council is now in a good position to achieve its objectives. It is proposed to retain the current Equality Objectives for 2018/19 with a progress report produced at the end of the year. **(Appendix A)**
- 7.5 Officers have reviewed legal cases where there have been objections to decisions by public bodies and an alleged failure to follow equality policies/duties has been a ground for challenge. Given the risk of such challenge to the Council it is proposed that the Council's policy is reviewed to ensure that it is clear and focussed on the Council's duties under the Act.
- 7.6 The proposed revised policy is attached at Appendix B for consideration.

Mark Trillo

Executive Director & Monitoring Officer

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Location

Contact details