

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan – 2021

The main areas of the government's Indicators of Integration have been incorporated into this plan to build on the community integration and cohesion work that is carried out by the council on an on-going basis. These include:

- Housing / social inclusion – homelessness / rough sleeping
- Education – work with local schools, young people
- Community work / facilities
- Health and social care
- Leisure
- Work
- Digital / technology
- Transport

| Equality Priority 1 – Seek to make the borough a welcoming place for everyone | | | | | |
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| Outcome | Action | How measured | By whom | When | Details / Status |
| 1a. Strong community relations are built in the borough | Local forums and groups supported to run activities to build good relations between different groups, be sustainable and representative of local communities. | Success / satisfaction and contacts built through activities held. | Community Support | On-going | A range of forums supported, mainly virtually, including, Multicultural, Older People, Basingstoke Interfaith Forum, Disability, Access 4 All working Group, Over 55s. Work to support forums to be sustainable and more representative of local communities is ongoing. |
| | Equalities monitoring in place to assist the council to understand the diverse needs of those who are in housing need. | Characteristics of those in housing need identified and monitored. | Housing | On-going / annual | Housing forms record and monitor equalities data to identify and address particular issues for any groups. None identified to date. The impact of the Housing Allocations Policy is regularly monitored – no equalities issues identified to date. |
| | Work with the Social Inclusion Partnership to eliminate rough sleeping and homelessness in the borough. | Numbers of individuals who are rough sleeping. | Social Inclusion | On-going | The Social Inclusion Partnership continues to meet virtually to share learning and build networks across the borough. The numbers of individuals who are sleeping rough has decreased significantly due to this effective partnership work. |
| 1b. The borough is a safe place where people want to live | Housing team working in partnership with Health and Social Care agencies to improve the support provided to individuals with mental health conditions and with a housing need. | Involvement in partnership work and improved support for service users | Housing | On-going | Support networks put in place to encourage self-sufficiency and socio-economic stability in the community, includes preparing people for the rollout of Universal Credit. Continued commitment to the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach way of working – ensuring a joined up response to those clients experiencing multiple disadvantage. |

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| | Partnership work with other agencies, such as the Police, Hampshire County Council, to tackle hate crime. | Involvement in community / other local forums and partnerships, production of hate crime leaflet – hate crime is reduced. | Community Support and Safer North Hampshire | On-going Leaflet produced | Regular liaison with the Police to facilitate communications with local communities, particularly in relation to the race equality work. Work with CAB to deliver the hate crime group and look for best practice at tackling related issues. Statistics analysed quarterly to target Community teams' work. Hate crime offences against disabled people are less likely to be reported, work is underway to address this. |
| | Support work with refugees | Number of individuals supported and settled into local community | Community | As required | Community Development Officer for Inclusion and Diversity works in partnership with other organisations to support refugees to settle into the local community, where necessary. |
| | Work with partners to address domestic violence | Partnership networks are maintained and adapt to local need | Community | On-going | The Community and Safety team continues to work closely with the local Domestic Violence Forum to ensure that the council supports vulnerable individuals, who are affected by domestic violence in the most effective way. |

Equality Priority 2 – Seek to make sure relevant services are accessible to all

| Outcome | Action | How measured | By whom | When | Status |
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| 2a. People are able to access council services in ways that meet their needs (this includes services that are commissioned by the council) | Continuous improvement of the customer experience in accessing council services | Customer Relationship Management (CRM) data and council website. | Customer Service, Improvement and Performance /All Business Units | Ongoing | Corporate Contact Centre (CCC) team provide Web Team with top ten reasons for calls each month to update and improve web customer journeys as appropriate. Service based Social Media enquiries are now handled by the CCC team, this reduces the time it takes to resolve queries for customers and offers an accessible channel for customer service, in addition to the Web Chat function. Web Chat has been introduced for the Benefits service and is delivered by the CCC. Council telephone Interactive Voice Response is set up to ensure that if a caller takes no action will route their call to the Corporate Contact Centre. BT Text Relay is available and if customers are unable to access services by other channels an appointment is made for them at reception (outside of lockdown) |
| | Council Website | Web Content Management System | Customer Service, Improvement | Ongoing | The council website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard. The website was last tested in March 2020 by Shaw Trust Accessibility Services, and the site is automatically tested each week using SiteImprove. An |

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| | | and Performance and Community Support teams | | upgrade to the site was performed in December 2020 which made a significant improvement in further reducing areas of non-compliance and the outstanding issues are currently being explored with the Shaw Trust. An up to date Accessibility Statement is available via the website. ' AccessAble ' website has been maintained – this provides accessibility information about a range of venues in the borough. The Customer Digital Platform programme will deliver a new Web Content Management System. |
| Community transport schemes serve individuals who are unable to access public transport | Schemes are accessible and meet the needs of a range of groups | Transport officer | On-going | Transport schemes that are supported by the council serve a range of passengers, however, the county council contracted Dial a Ride service is also for anyone whose transport needs are not met by public bus services e.g. have certain access issues or no bus service nearby. |
| Digital Strategy development includes actions to facilitate digital inclusion and consideration of diverse needs | Equality impact assessments, and where relevant engagement, is carried out on all new Digital initiatives | Digital team | On-going | Taking practical action to embed digital inclusion and accessibility into the council's digital work to make sure that service users are not excluded from services e.g. voice recognition software is made available to both customers with particular access needs. |
| Health and Wellbeing team commissions third parties to deliver programmes that target people living in deprived areas and specific demographic groups e.g. older people | Attendance and customer feedback | Health and Wellbeing | On-going | Projects have been adapted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and other new initiatives are being planned for 2021. Updates on these will be provided through the council's website. |
| Leisure – council and partners have invested in new facilities that meet local community needs | Attendance at these facilities and customer feedback | Health and Wellbeing | On-going | Major sports facilities provided, such as, all-weather pitches at Testbourne and The Vyne Schools, Down Grange and Winklebury Stadium. These have development plans targeting young people. Investment in local sports infrastructure to improve accessibility, such as at Fieldgate Community Centre. |
| Concessionary pricing scheme in place for residents, who are eligible to use the facilities at Aquadrome, | Corporate Key Performance Indicators for attendance and customer satisfaction | Health and Wellbeing | On-going | Basingstoke Sport and Leisure Trust provide a concessionary pricing scheme for use for the swimming pools and gym facilities for people on a low income e.g. in receipt of Universal Credit or those who are over 60. |

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| | Tadley Health and Fitness Centre and Basingstoke Golf Centre | | | | |
| | Provide information through a range of communication channels and materials in a range of formats (e.g. large print, other languages etc.) and use a range of communication channels. | Evidence of materials being provided in alternative formats as necessary / Use of diverse communication channels | Communications and Customer Services | On-going | The council has a duty to provide information in a range of formats via social media, leaflets, emails and virtual meetings. All communications offer at least two ways of contacting the council, to ensure that customers are provided with the information they need in the most accessible way. Communications are circulated through a range of channels e.g. representative forums. |
| | Service areas continue to collect and analyse customer equalities information, where relevant. | Level and type of equalities data collected by service areas | All Business Units | On-going | Services continue to be supported to consider equalities data in consultation and service use to analyse trends/address issues where necessary. |
| 2b. The council can demonstrate that its services and policies meet the Public Sector Equality Duty | Continued use of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process throughout the council, where relevant, supported by Equality Working Group (EWG) members. | EIAs and associated actions completed Reports include EIA findings | EWG /All Business Units | On-going | EIAs continue are carried out, where necessary, by the Equality Working Group. Findings are included in councillor reports to inform decision-making. EIAs completed by range of service areas e.g. Housing, Benefits, Planning, and Community. Where any issues were identified, mitigating actions are considered. |
| | Data on service use is gathered and analysed to ensure that any gaps in provision are addressed. | Service teams data | EWG /All Business Units | Quarterly reviews | Data demonstrating who is using council services is published, and analysis to address any gaps in provision, is carried out on an annual basis. |
| Equality Priority 3 – Seek to provide fair treatment that meets individual needs | | | | | |
| Outcome | Action | How measured | By whom | When | Status |
| 3a. The council has a good understanding of people's needs and delivers services / works with | Equalities monitoring carried out, where relevant, across council through consultation, surveys etc. | Use of standard equalities questions in consultations and customer surveys | All Business Units | On-going | Continued monitoring of equalities data from consultation and engagement activities. Current data show that there is a lack of representation of young and people aged over 65, disabled people and individuals from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups. To better understand the reason for this discussion has been held with local groups. Feedback provided forms part of a review of the council's approach to consultations. |

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| partners to meet those needs | Impact of grants to voluntary and community sector monitored and reported back to Performance Panel | Through regular monitoring of grants awarded | Grant Officers | Quarterly /bi-annually | Quarterly monitoring of strategic grants and six monthly monitoring of programme grants against agreed KPIs – these are allocated to a range of Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs). Regular oversight of Local Infrastructure Fund projects and annual follow-up of outcomes achieved – these are allocated to local VCOs to improve access to, and participation in, local community activities. |
| | Coordination of the Employment and Skills Zone work to promote inclusive approach to employment in the borough | Increase in training opportunities and employment for underrepresented groups | Economy and Culture team | On-going | Disability sub-group of the Employment and Skills Zone promotes inclusion and improve access for of disabled candidates and those who have long term health conditions. Work is continuing to provide online training for individuals who have been out of work for a long time or have particular barriers to accessing employment. |
| 3b. People can to participate in the council's decision-making processes and are consulted on policies and services that affect them | Consultation and EIA guidance provided to teams includes advice on how to engage with diverse groups to better understand people's needs and share learning. | Accessible formats and variety of consultation methods used Range of people involved in consultations | Policy / All Business Units | On-going | The council has adapted its approach to consultation and engagement with diverse communities due to COVID-19. Service teams use virtual tools such as Zoom but still make sure that those who do not have internet access can participate via telephone / post etc. Consultation Log and EIA guidance support this work. |
| | Increase and broaden participation in democratic activities in the borough. | Increased diversity of respondents / participants in engagement activities | Policy / Democratic Services | On-going | Discussions with community representative forums e.g. Over 55s, Access 4 All, and Basingstoke Multicultural Forum. These have been limited this year due to the pandemic but more work is planned for 2021. |

Equality Priority 4 – Commit to having and increasingly diverse workforce

| Outcome | Action | How measured | By whom | When | Status |
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| 4a. The council workforce better reflects the local working population and different skills | Development of recruitment and other HR practices to ensure that equality principles are embedded and that processes are inclusive and accessible. | Workforce equalities data - % of protected characteristics groups reaching interview stage / employed. | Human Resources (HR) | Review bi-annually | Work has been initiated to analyse the workforce and borough working age profile and consider how gaps in representation can be addressed. Conversations held with local community representative forums in late 2019 and early 2020 to inform this work. This work was paused due to prioritisation of COVID-19 work, however, it will be picked up again in 2021. Particularly via the Race at Work Charter that the council committed to signing up to in December 2020. |

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| and talents are valued | Equalities profiles of employees, job applicants and apprentices are monitored and any adverse trends addressed. | Workforce equalities data - % of protected characteristics groups reaching interview stage / employed. | Human Resources (HR) | Review bi-annually | Data reported bi-annually to HR Committee and information published as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (relevant actions as above). 'Disability Confident Employer' certificate was renewed at level 2 in June 2019 and runs until June 2021. Apprenticeships and work experience placements offered to encourage younger people to join the workforce. Work is being carried out in line with the Armed Forces Covenant to improve recruitment practices. |
| | Address trends identified in staff survey by employees from key protected characteristics groups. | % satisfaction rates in staff survey by protected characteristics. | HR | Review every two years | Staff wellbeing survey results have informed HR's work to support people who are working from home and those who have suffered with mental health issues due to the pandemic. |
| | Enable flexible working options to support enhance work life balance for all staff | Wide range of flexible working options available | HR / Digital | On-going | The Smarter Ways of Working project is in progress, which aims to make working practices and office space at the council more flexible, accessible and efficient e.g. via voice recognition software, office furniture. Teams are assessing the impact of new proposals on mental health and the need to maintain reasonable adjustments. |
| 4b. Employees, managers and councillors comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty | Ensure appropriate equalities training continues to be provided and employees and councillors carry out training on equality and diversity related issues. | Number of training opportunities provided % employees and Councillors that carried out e-learning training. | HR | Review annually | Elearning is undertaken by staff and is available to councillors. Plan for councillor induction sessions in 2021 to include more training on equality, diversity and inclusion. |
| | Gender and ethnicity pay gap audit for council workforce. | Number of women, men and ethnicities in different pay bands and relative pay received for the same jobs. | HR | Review annually | The council's pay gap is still relatively very low when compared nationally and to other local authorities. Ethnicity pay gap guidance is pending from government but consideration is already being given to relevant statistics and improving on recruitment / working practices. |
| | Awareness raising and practical support for staff and managers about mental health conditions (disability, signs, symptoms and support). | Information, guidance and training provided. | HR | Review annually | Mental health training sessions and events have taken place virtually. A new Health and Wellbeing resource page has been created on the staff intranet and regular communications on the support available are provided via the Chief Executive and Friday Bulletins. |