

Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality Impact Assessment Report – vs.3 February 2018

1. Reason for the EQIA

The first iteration of the Equality and Diversity Policy was agreed at Executive in November 2016. In February 2018 the policy was reviewed and revised and now includes a section on accessibility of services including physical and digital accessibility.

An implementation plan identifying priority areas for action was developed but there has been limited progress on this. As a result of this a set of priority actions has been identified and recommended to Strategic Management Board. This will provide up to date evidence of where progress has been made and the priority areas for improvement to form a revised plan.

The lead officer for the development of the policy is Melinda Pogue-Jackson, Policy Officer with the work of the original policy being scrutinised by the Equality Task and Finish Group. The timescales for the completion and delivery of the revised policy, to include travel through the committee cycle is June 2018.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy describes and clarifies the council's vision and aims with regard to promoting equality, the delivery of services and tackling exclusion for both the citizens of Exeter and the employees of the council. This approach links to the ECC Corporate Plan 2018/19 in particular the corporate objectives of

- An active and healthy City
- Empowered communities involved in the design and delivery of our local services and facilities
- A well run Council with effective, efficient, person-centred services

However there are equality issues to be found in all ten objectives. The policy also links to the council's commitment to the Devon Joint Declaration for Equality.

The main beneficiaries of this policy will be the citizens of Exeter and ECC employees with neither group being the predominant stakeholder. The beneficial impact of adopting an inclusive and equality driven approach is generally well known with the Equality and Human Rights Commission making the following key points:

- Can achieve a reduction in the likelihood of unlawful discrimination or legal claim
- Achieves compliance with legislation and the Public Sector Duty
- Supports good organisational performance
- Increased worker satisfaction
- Improved understanding of customers, clients and service user needs

3. Data used to measure impact

When the policy was first approved it was recognised that there was a need to build on limited current data to gain a better picture of the impacts of the policy on particular groups. This has not yet been achieved however work being undertaken through Wellbeing Exeter should provide insights in to the nature of some impacts on marginalised or hard to hear groups.

When considering impacts in relation to protected characteristics there are some anecdotal indicators of where there might be a negative or positive impact, these could include:

- Gender – attitudes to transgender people
- Religion and belief – understanding the impact of cultural dynamics in accessing services and employment
- Age – the impact of Dementia for engaging with services or employees with caring responsibilities
- Disability – the impact of Mental Health on seeking and retaining employment
- Race and Ethnicity – the confusion and conflation of the terms of Refugee and Immigrant on attitudes to those seeking housing

4. Feedback from the consultation and identified impact

The draft of the original Equality & Diversity Policy was shared with the Police Local Reference Group (consisting of a wide range of community groups) for feedback and this did not prompt any identification of impacts (negative or positive). The committee were alerted to this information with the recommendation that individual organisations be consulted as part of the implementation of the policy. This is likely to be a more meaningful and dynamic exercise, directly impacting on how the council conducts its business. The policy itself and this document can then be updated accordingly. As this has so far not been achieved it is proposed that the action be carried forward and included in any future action plan.

5. Actions to be taken as a result of the EqIA

This section will cover actions that have been identified as a result of the consultation.

6. Monitoring and review

This section will cover the processes for monitoring and review once consultation has been completed but will include as a minimum the following.

- a. An annual review will be scheduled to establish whether or not there has been any disproportionate effect on any of the target groups
- b. Relevant monitoring processes will be devised to identify and assess the impact data to ensure an appropriate response.