

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Director (Change and Delivery) (Introduced by Executive Member (Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships)) | Executive Cabinet | Thursday 23 January 2025 |

Equality Objectives and Equality Strategy

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| Is this report confidential? | No |
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| Is this decision key? | No |
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Purpose of the Report

1. To set out the proposed equality objectives, Equality Strategy and action plan and to seek approval from Executive Cabinet.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. To review and approve the proposed equality objectives for 2025 – 2029.
3. To review and approve the Equality Strategy 2025 – 2029 and action plan.

Reasons for recommendations

4. The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to publish equality objectives every 4 years. The equality objectives were last agreed in 2020, so now require refreshing.
5. The Equality Strategy and action plan will help to provide structure to demonstrate how the Council will achieve the objectives.

Other options considered and rejected

6. No other options have been considered as the Council has a legal duty to undertake the publishing of its objectives.
7. The Equality Strategy and action plan will provide structure that articulates how the Council will ensure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty which is a legal requirement.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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| Housing where residents can live well | A green and sustainable borough |
| An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas | Healthy, safe and engaged communities |

Background to the report

9. The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
10. Under the Equality Act 2010, equality objectives should be updated and published at least every 4 years. The Council last set objectives in 2020 which require refreshing.
11. The new Equality Strategy will help to ensure equality is considered within decision-making, policy and service delivery. This will help to strengthen our commitment to addressing inequalities.

Equality Objectives

12. The five proposed equality objectives for 2025 – 2029 are outlined in the table below:

| Duty | Equality Objective |
|--|---|
| Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering and developing positive cultures and understanding – ensure our staff are able to deliver services fairly and can model behaviours that help to create an inclusive work environment. |
| Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building an inclusive workforce – to help attract, recruit and retain the best people for the job, we will develop an open, collaborative and inclusive culture where the principles of fairness and wellbeing are promoted. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate access to services for all – to make sure we support each and every resident in the right way we will regularly review how we deliver our services and make changes where needed. |
| Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people in the community who are most in need – we will focus on ensuring that the needs of the whole community are being addressed now and, in the future. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve our communities – we will work to involve local people and engage openly with our residents and service users, seeking to capture all points of view to make better informed decisions. |

Equality Strategy and Action Plan

13. The Equality Strategy has been developed in order to build strong foundations of our commitment to equality and diversity, understand more about our communities and develop our workforce to champion equality with the aim of delivering more inclusive services for our residents.
14. When approved, this strategy will be available on the Council website and the staff intranet and will meet accessibility standards.
15. The equality action plan will provide structure that clearly articulates how the Council will ensure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty.
16. A dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board will be introduced to monitor the implementation of the strategy and bring forward new ideas on how to promote and support equality, diversity and inclusion. The board will consist of senior leaders, officers working on equality, diversity and inclusion and Elected Members with an interest and expertise in equality, diversity and inclusion. We will also consider involvement and representation from partners and relevant groups where this would add value and support the council in taking action.
17. Progress against the action plan indicators will be monitored as part of quarterly reports to the Senior Management Team and annual reports to Executive Cabinet.
18. An annual Public Sector Equality Duty report will be completed to provide evidence as to how the Council has complied with the Equality Act 2010 and its specific duties.

Equality Work Update

19. Equality work is already underway including the relaunch of the staff Equality Champions Network to support the organisation in the delivery of its equality objectives and promote a diverse, supportive and inclusive workplace culture.
20. Borough profiles have been created to provide a deeper understanding of the demographics and protected characteristics groups within Chorley and an equality, diversity and inclusion celebration calendar is being developed so we can celebrate key dates externally to increase awareness and share relevant information around equality.
21. In the future we will reinvigorate the Equality Forum which will have Councillor and public representation to champion equality, diversity and inclusion.

Climate change and air quality

22. The work noted in this report does not have an impact on the Council's carbon emissions and the wider climate emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

23. An impact assessment has been completed to assess any potential impact the new equality objectives and strategy may have on protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty as a public authority.

24. The changes proposed will have a positive impact on residents, particularly those with protected characteristics, to promote inclusivity across the organisation and strengthen the Council's commitment to supporting equality and diversity.

Risk

25. The risk to delivery is capacity across the organisation to complete the activities outlined in the action plan. However, progress against action plans will be monitored as part of quarterly reports to the Senior Management Team and annual reports to Executive Cabinet.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

26. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

27. The legal implications have been identified in the body of the report.

Background documents

The Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government was used to inform the development of the Equality Strategy:

[Equality Framework for Local Government | Local Government Association](#)

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Strategy

Appendix B – Equality Action Plan

Appendix C – Impact Assessment

| Report Author: | Email: | Telephone: | Date: |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
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This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.