

| Report of   | Meeting           | Date                       |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Director (Policy and Governance)<br>(Introduced by the Executive<br>Member for Resources) | Executive Cabinet | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2016 |

## EQUALITY SCHEME REFRESH 2016

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present a revised and updated version of the Equality Scheme for the Executive's consideration and approval (the updated scheme can be found at Appendix 1).

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the updated Equality Scheme be noted and approved.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. This report presents a refreshed Equality Scheme for the Council.
4. The scheme represents our most recent approach towards equality and diversity based on a comprehensive review of legislation, data and best practise. It outlines our approach, the processes we undertake and the strategies and policies we have in place to ensure that we continue to undertake our duties as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
5. The scheme contains an action plan (Appendix A) which outlines the key activities we will undertake over 2016/17 to enhance and improve our performance by incorporating the principles of equality into the work we undertake as a Council.

|  |     |           |
|--|-----|-----------|
| <b>Confidential report</b><br>Please bold as appropriate | Yes | <b>No</b> |
|--|-----|-----------|

|  |     |           |
|--|-----|-----------|
| <b>Key Decision?</b><br>Please bold as appropriate | Yes | <b>No</b> |
|--|-----|-----------|

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Reason</b><br>Please bold as appropriate | 1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more | 2, a contract worth £100,000 or more  |
|   | 3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more                                       | 4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards |

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

### (If the recommendations are accepted)

6. Our Equality Scheme sets out our vision for equality. If approved, the scheme will outline the steps we will be taking over the coming years to proactively promote equality and diversity through our roles as a service provider, community leader and employer. It also enables us to set out our plans as to how we will meet the Equality Act 2010 in terms of both the general duties and the specific public sector duty.
7. A strong commitment to equality and diversity will not only help us to meet our legal requirements but will also provide benefits to our local communities. As an organisation that is committed to understanding and shaping its services around customer needs, we need to be able to recognise and adapt to the diverse nature of our local communities.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. To continue with the existing Equality Scheme.
9. Continuing with our current Equality Scheme is not considered an option as, whilst comprehensive, the current scheme is outdated and does not reflect our most up to date approach towards equality and diversity considerations as an organisation.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all | √ | A strong local economy  |   |
| Clean, safe and healthy communities  |   | An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area | √ |

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

11. As a public body, Chorley Council is subject to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which includes both general equality and specific public sector duties.
12. The general equality duty states that we must, in the exercise of all of our functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
13. In addition, Public Authorities listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) Regulations 2011 must:
  - Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and,
  - Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years
14. Chorley Council published an updated Equality Scheme in 2011, to reflect the changes that were introduced by the Equality Act 2010. Since then, the scheme has been amended slightly, to reflect the updated census data available in February 2013.

15. The scheme recognises ten equality strands:
- Age
  - Disability
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Pregnancy and Maternity
  - Race
  - Religion and Belief
  - Rurality
  - Sex
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Marriage and Civil Partnerships
16. Each strand identifies a group of customers who share a similar characteristic, which is protected by law. The exception to this is the rurality strand which is not protected by law but is contained within our scheme to ensure the needs of customers who live in rural areas are considered. Rurality was adopted as an equality strand by the Council following an overview and scrutiny inquiry in 2007 which made the recommendation (30.9% of the Chorley population live in rural areas).

## LOCAL PICTURE

17. In order to ensure that our most recent equality scheme reflects the needs of our local communities, it is important to understand what our Chorley population looks like, how it is changing and what we are currently doing as a Council to promote equality and diversity across the borough. In summary:
- Chorley has a larger proportion of 45-64 year olds and those aged 65+ than both the regional and national average (ONS 2013). By 2020 it is estimated that almost 25% of Chorley's population will be aged 60 years and over.
  - The number of households in Chorley increased by 9.4% from 41,027 in 2001 to 44,900 in 2011, this is the largest rate of increase in Lancashire and higher than in England and Wales.
  - According to the 2011 census, 96.9% of the Chorley population reported themselves to be white, 1.6% of population reported themselves to be Asian/Asian British, 0.9% of the population reported themselves to be mixed/multiple ethnic groups, 0.4% of the population reported themselves to be Black/African/ Caribbean/ Black British and 0.2% any other ethnic group.
  - The percentage of people stating no religion has increased from 9.08% to 17.9% between 2001 and 2011 census (ONS 2001 and 2011 Census). The Muslim population has almost doubled in Chorley between 2001 and 2011, from 647 people to 1130 people (ONS 2001 and 2011 Census).
18. The following provides an example of activities which have been undertaken by the Council to promote equality and diversity within the borough:
- **Disabled Go venue access guides** – This project has developed online disabled and dementia venue access guides to enable residents and visitors to make an informed choice when they visit venues in Chorley. Chorley Council was the first to include dementia friendly as a category within the guide.
  - **Rural Community Action Plans** – 30.9% of our residents live in rural areas, the rural community action plan has been developed to deliver positive outcomes for those who live within rural wards in Chorley.
  - **Reach Up and Go sporting activities** – our unique programme funded by and working in partnership with LCC to provide activities for children and young people with disabilities. This project delivers specific programmes in arts and sport and also helps with assistance for young people to access regular activity.

- **Equality Forum** – The Equality Forum meets three times per year. The meetings are a mechanism for engaging with the equality strands through the community groups that represent them; in a way that builds community cohesion and resilience within our communities.
- **Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's)** – All new policies, functions or services are required to undergo an impact assessment as part of their development process. The assessment involves assessing the policy, function or service against our equality strands, health, sustainability and reputational impact and an action plan is required to be compiled from any actions identified through the assessment.
- **Staff training** – Equality and diversity training (Knowing Your Customers and Communities) is built into the Council's induction process for all new staff. Senior staff have received training on Understanding Unconscious Bias which aims to ensure the Council is at the leading edge of inclusion.

## THE EQUALITY SCHEME

19. To ensure that the council continues to meet legislative requirements as well as demonstrating our commitment to equality, a refresh of the Equality Scheme was completed by:
  - Completing a self-assessment exercise against the Local Government Association Equalities Framework for Local Government. Overall, the Council was found to be 'Achieving' across most areas of the framework. Some of our strengths identified included; communication, staff engagement and being a proactive community leader. Some areas for development were also identified such as; equality objectives monitoring, developing a shared vision of equality and shared engagement processes with partners and developing an updated process regarding Integrated Impact assessments
  - A review of the data available (including census information, customer satisfaction information and local crime statistics).
  - Consultation with service areas and review of our existing equality processes.
  - Development of an action plan for 2016/17(Appendix A)
  - The introduction of new Equality Objectives for 2016/2020, which were developed through analysis of available data and consultation with the Equality Forum, Local Partners and the wider public through the Council website (Appendix B).
20. The refreshed scheme sets out the steps we will be taking over the coming years to proactively promote equality through our role as a service provider, community leader and employer. It describes how we ensure that equality is embedded into our processes and indicates the information and tools that are used to do this.

## CHANGES AND UPDATES

21. Whilst the scheme itself and the provisions within it remain largely unchanged, some updates have been made in light of the refresh, these updates include:

| SECTION             | UPDATE   |
|---------------------|--|
| PROFILE INFORMATION | The information about our Chorley community has been updated where possible to reflect more recent data. The data is now displayed through using infographics to make it more visual and accessible.   |
| EQUALITY STRANDS    | Marriage and Civil Partnerships has been added as an equality strand, aligning our policy with all equality strands as outlined by the Public Sector Equality Duty. This characteristic is covered by the duty, however only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination. For all other strands due regard must also be given to: advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it and; fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.  |
| PROCESSES           | Our processes for embedding equality and diversity have been updated; the Equalities Framework for Local Government has been included within the scheme. This is something which we have introduced through this refresh as a tool to self-assess our performance against this framework.  |
| EQUALITY OBJECTIVES | <p>As part of our commitment to meeting the standards of the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to publish a set of equality objectives. The objectives help to make sure that the Council and its partners have clear goals for improvement and a way of measuring whether we achieve these goals.</p> <p>We have developed a list of potential objectives for 2016-2020 by reviewing information about our customers and communities using recent data, consultation with managers, local partners and the Equality Forum.</p> <p>The list of objectives can be found within the Equality Scheme document and are outlined at Appendix B of this report.</p> |
| ACTION PLAN         | <p>An action plan has been developed which outlines tasks to be completed in 2016/17.</p> <p>The actions contained within the plan aim to ensure we continually improve our processes and procedures and comply with our duties under the Act. Undertaking and completing the tasks will also ensure that we are working towards improving our performance against the Equalities Framework for Local Government, where this is deemed proportionate and appropriate for Chorley residents.</p>  |

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

22. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Finance                                  |  | Customer Services                      |   |
| Human Resources                          |  | Equality and Diversity                 | √ |
| Legal                                    |  | Integrated Impact Assessment required? |   |
| No significant implications in this area |  | Policy and Governance                  | √ |

**COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR (POLICY AND GOVERNANCE)**

23. The Equality Scheme is a key document for the council in demonstrating our compliance with the public sector equality duty. In addition, the scheme will support the council in meeting the needs of our residents and customers, so ensuring that it is reviewed and relevant is important.

**COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

24. The Equality Scheme provides documentary evidence of how the Council intend to comply with our Equality Duties. This fulfils the council's legal obligations in this regard.

CHRIS SINNOTT  
DIRECTOR (POLICY AND GOVERNANCE)

| Report Author | Ext  | Date                       | Doc ID  |
|---------------|------|----------------------------|---|
| Kate Cronin   | 5348 | 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2016 | Equality Scheme Refresh Exec Cabinet report June 2016 |

## Appendix A – Action Plan 2016/17

| <b>EFLG Theme</b>  | <b>Action</b>  | <b>By When?</b> | <b>By Who?</b>   |
|--|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>All</b>   | Ensure that we work towards applying the principles of excellence under the EFLG framework , reaching achieving in the majority of areas | March 2017      | Organisation wide<br>Policy and Governance<br>overview   |
| <b>Knowing your communities</b>                              | Undertake a review of our approach to data collection as a council, understand where our gaps are and address these gaps                 | August 2016     | Policy and Governance                                    |
|  | Ensure equality monitoring is applied consistently across the organisation   | September 2016  | Policy and Governance<br>Directorate Management<br>Teams |
|  | Work with our partners to ensure plans and protocols are in place to collect, share and use equality information                         | March 2017      | Equality Forum<br>Local Networks<br>Chorley Council      |
| <b>Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment</b> | Publish Equality Objectives 2016/2020  | April 2016      | Policy and Governance                                    |
|  | Ensure that our equality objectives are cascaded to all services and outcomes are measured   | May 2016        | Directorate Management<br>Teams<br>Policy and Governance |
| <b>Involving your communities</b>                            | Map our consultation and engagement activity to establish any engagement gaps  | March 2017      | Directorate Management<br>Teams<br>Policy and Governance |
| <b>Responsive Services and Customer Care</b>                 | Develop and implement an updated process for Integrated Impact assessments   | March 2017      | Policy and Governance                                    |
| <b>A skilled and Committed workforce</b>                     | Roll out of equality and diversity refresher training for all staff and members, building in any new considerations                      | November 2016   | Policy and Governance                                    |

## Appendix B – Equality Objectives 2016-20

| Objective |   | Targets and measures   | By when?                     |
|-----------|---|--|------------------------------|
| 1         | To ensure that the Council takes into account equality considerations and population trends when planning the delivery of its services                            | 80% of impact assessments will be completed/reviewed.  | April 2017                   |
| 2         | To improve outcomes for those who live in rural areas, reducing the effect of rural isolation across our borough  | A 50% increase in the number of people attending digital access sessions. The number of people attending the sessions will be measured annually.<br><br>Develop and deliver a community transport scheme.                                | April 2020<br><br>April 2017 |
| 3         | To increase the satisfaction levels of our customers and make sure that everyone feels that they are able to engage and has the opportunity to do so if they wish | Less than 20% of customers dissatisfied, this will be measured through our monthly customer satisfaction survey.<br><br>85% of residents satisfied with the local area, this will be measured through our residents satisfaction survey. | April 2020<br><br>April 2018 |



| Objective |   | Targets and measures   | By when?                            |
|-----------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 4         | To improve relationships within our local communities, making sure that positive relationships are encouraged and established   | <p>60% of residents willing to work together to improve the local area as measured through our resident's satisfaction survey.</p> <p>A 35% increase in the number of volunteering hours earned, measured through our Time Credits scheme.</p>   | <p>April 2018</p> <p>April 2020</p> |
| 5         | To make sure that the age of our workforce reflects the local population as much as possible, and to continue to ensure that all of our employees feel they are treated fairly and with respect | <p>Increase the percentage of those aged 16-24 in the workforce by 25%; this will be measured through our employment data.</p> <p>Increase the percentage of staff feeling they are treated with respect and consideration by 5%, measured through our staff survey.</p>   | <p>April 2018</p> <p>April 2018</p> |
| 6         | Chorley council will aim to promote the highest standards with regards to equality and diversity  | <p>Reaching excellence in specific areas of the EFLG framework self-assessment, more information on the framework can be found below:<br/> <a href="http://www.local.gov.uk/equality-frameworks/-/journal_content/56/10180/3476575/ARTICLE">http://www.local.gov.uk/equality-frameworks/-/journal_content/56/10180/3476575/ARTICLE</a></p> | <p>April 2020</p>                   |

| Objectives |   | Targets and measures  | By when?   |
|------------|---|---|------------|
| 7          | We will make sure that the needs of protected groups are taken into account when considering changes we plan to make to the local town centre | <p>Increase the percentage of consultation and engagement views and responses from communities across protected groups by 5%. This will be measured through the equalities monitoring information we collect when we consult with the public.</p> <p>Results of Integrated Impact Assessments</p> | April 2020 |