

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COUNCIL STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY COHESION

24 FEBRUARY 2022

**EQUALITY INFORMATION PUBLICATION 2020-21
Assistant Director: Chief Executive's Office**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To brief the Executive Member for Council Strategy and Community Cohesion on the council's equality monitoring service reports for 2020-21 at Annex A for publication on the council's website.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Equality Monitoring reports for 2020-21 attached at Annex A are approved for publication on the council's website.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 and corresponding regulations outline the specific duties that the council is required to meet to demonstrate its compliance with its equality duties – i.e. to have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

These duties include publishing equality information annually by the end of January each year.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None. The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations between people.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 To assess whether Bracknell Forest Council's services are fulfilling the three equality duties, information on access, outcomes/ performance, and satisfaction have been analysed and reports produced for the following services:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Community Safety
- Customer Services
- Early Help
- Education
- Housing

Unrestricted

- Leisure Services
- Library Services
- Public Health
- Welfare

The COVID-19 pandemic affected council teams and some contracted out services during the reporting period of April 2020 – March 2021.

Many were closed for various periods during this time i.e. leisure services and libraries. Council departments had to work out a different way of providing services as council offices and some face to face services were closed or extremely difficult to carry out. Data has shown the impact of COVID-19 on more vulnerable residents and communities has exacerbated existing inequalities. The continued effects of the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions has meant some ongoing work has had to be delayed due to operational pressures on service areas.

The service equality reports, which have been approved for publication by the relevant Directorate Management Teams, have been used to produce a council wide services equality information report which is attached at Annex A.

Workforce Equality Information Report 2020-21

- 5.6 The workforce equality information report for 2020-21 will be published following approval by the council's Employment Committee in March. The report summarises the council's workforce equality information for 2020-21.

Conclusion

- 5.7 The council wide report and the associated service reports show that Bracknell Forest Council is making good progress in meeting the three Public Sector duties in the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people, though there remains much more to do. A new 'All of Us' Equality Scheme has been developed for 2022-25 and will be published in April. It outlines the council's new equality objectives which have been co-produced with staff, members, partners and community groups and reflect a range of current equality issues including those relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the main body of the report.

Director: Finance

- 6.2 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 N/A – see 7.1 – 7.3 below.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 The equality reports outline how the Council will meet its legal duties to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

Unrestricted

- 6.5 Failure to achieve the objectives of the scheme could risk legal challenge and reduce the levels of cohesion in the borough.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

The council believes the recommendations will have no impact on emissions as they relate principally to the public sector equality duty which seeks to reduce inequalities, advance equality of opportunity for all residents leading to improvements to health and wellbeing.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The Council's Equalities Group and Departmental Management Teams.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 By email and in meetings.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Included in this report.

Background Papers

Annex A – 'All of Us' Equalities Reports – Council Wide Report and Services reports.

Contact for further information

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