

REPORT 2

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CABINET MEETING OF: 1st NOVEMBER 2021

PUBLIC REPORT: Y

EXEMPT REPORT: N

Report Title	Equality Plan 2021/24
KEY DECISION	Yes
Report Author	Julie Clarke, Equality and Diversity Officer
Purpose of Report	To approve the implementation of the Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2021/24.
Reason for Decision	The Council's current Equality Plan 2017/20 has expired. The Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2021/24 contains our updated Equality Objectives.
Portfolio (holder)	Councillor Dann
Corporate Priorities	The People: A healthy, inclusive and empowered community
Financial Implications	All new employees receive a one-hour 'introduction to equality' initial briefing. This outlines the Council's responsibility with regard to equality and diversity and forms part of the plan to embed equality and diversity throughout the organisation, by developing staff knowledge and awareness. Staff awareness is refreshed at least every 3 years by mandatory completion of an online learning module. This training is covered within the existing budgets.
Risk Management Implications	There is a potential risk to the Council if there is a failure to recognise the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and adhere to the specific duty implementation deadlines.
Environmental Implications	None identified.
Legal Implications	There is a legal requirement on the Council to identify and publish its equality objectives every four years, to publish employee equality and diversity data annually. We must also pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Failure to comply with the public sector equality duty could result in the council facing a legal challenge and reputational damage.

REPORT 2

Equality Implications	<p>The main purpose of the plan is to ensure that all people are treated with fairness and respect regardless of their personal characteristics. The plan has been written in clear English and in a way that simplifies the commitment Harborough District Council has towards Equality, meaning that people can easily understand our responsibilities and our dedication to working towards cultivating an inclusive community.</p> <p>An Equality Analysis has been completed as part of the plan's development - Appendix B</p>
Data Protection Implications	None identified.
Consultation	Consultation with staff and external partners and community groups was undertaken between April 2021 and June 2021. The Plan was reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel – Communities on 24.06.21
Options	Not producing an Equality Plan. However, the Council has a duty to identify and publish its equality objectives to meet legislative requirements and the Council's existing Equality Plan is out of date and in need of review.
Background Papers	Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2017/20 Scrutiny Panel - Communities 24 June 2021
Recommendation	1. That members approve the Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2021/24

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2021/24 contains our updated Equality Objectives and there is a legal requirement for us to identify and publish these at least every 4 years.
- 1.2 The commitments and objectives outlined within the plan are designed to have a positive impact on local communities when incorporated into service delivery.

2. Key Facts

- 2.1 With the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011, the Council adopted a Single Equality Scheme to bring its policies into line with new legislative requirements. This Scheme was updated as part of our Equality Plan 2014/17 and is reviewed every three years to ensure that it incorporates any changes in legislation. The new Equality Plan 2021/24 aims to demonstrate our continuous development in this area.
- 2.2 There is a legal requirement for a local authority to publish employee equality monitoring data annually and prepare and publish its equality objectives and

commitments at least every four years. This plan helps to ensure that we are able to fulfil our responsibility and respond to changes in legislation.

- 2.3 The public sector equality duty is a general duty which requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This plan helps to ensure that we are able to fulfil our responsibility with regard to our public sector equality duties.

- 2.4 Guidance is available for managers and staff with regard to completing equality and statistical analyses to assist them in making informed decisions.
- 2.5 The draft plan underwent external consultation with local community groups and with groups sub-regionally as well as undergoing internal consultation. The plan was reviewed by the Council Scrutiny Panel – Communities in June 2021.

Appendices:

- A. [Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2020/24 \(V4\)](#)
- B. [Harborough District Council Equality Plan 2020/24 – Equality Analysis \(V2\)](#)