

## **Divisions Affected – Not applicable**

**Cabinet**  
**19 July 2022**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-23**

#### **Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) adopt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2022-2023;
- b) agree delegated authority to the Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources to agree minor typographical changes to the action plan and an updated foreword from the Leader.

## **Executive Summary**

1. This report sets out how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan for 2022-23 has been developed to support the Council's EDI framework known as 'Including Everyone'. The action plan for adoption is attached as annex 1. It has been considered by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their comments have been taken into consideration when finalising the plan and will be considered in the development of further plans.

## **Background**

2. Under the duties of the Equality Act 2010, all local authorities must produce a four-year equalities framework or strategy. The Council's EDI framework, known as 'Including Everyone', was agreed in November 2020.
3. The 2021-22 action plan has been reported to members as part of the Business Management and Monitoring report twice a year. This report presents the draft 2022-23 action plan for adoption by Cabinet. As with the previous action plan this will also be reported twice a year via the Business Management and Monitoring report. The full draft plan is attached as annex 1 to this report.

## CA13

4. To develop the second action plan, the Council has taken a different approach to the previous year, building on the adoption of the Council's new values and behaviours through the 'Delivering the Future Together' programme. 'Equality and Integrity in All We Do' is one of the new values and, to embed this, actions have been developed through Service Delivery Plans. This builds on the ambition in the Including Everyone framework that inclusion is everyone's responsibility.
5. The draft action plan has been reviewed by the internal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, which is comprised of members of the Senior Leadership Team, Extended Leadership Team and representatives of our staff networks.
6. The draft action plan was also reviewed by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June. The committee requested that a clearer link is established between the action plan and work that is underway to address the increased cost of living. A separate workstream has been established to consider how the Council can address the increased cost of living and officers will work closely together to ensure that our EDI programme aligns with and supports this work.
7. The full 'Including Everyone' framework is attached for reference at annex 2 and a new foreword by the Leader is currently in the process of being produced. The report requests delegated authority to the Director of Customer and Organisational Development to agree typographical changes in conjunction with the appropriate Cabinet member.

### **Commitments from 2022-23**

8. A key learning from the 2021-22 action plan was the need to ensure that actions are more specific and measurable and this has been reflected in the commitments for this year's plan.
9. New actions proposed for this year include:
  - Create a more digitally inclusive website that proudly promotes our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
  - Offer additional support to a further 104 asylum-seeking children and young people through the National Transfer Scheme by March 2023
  - Develop community insights into healthy weight and physical activity with a focus on inequality
  - Review the support we offer our armed forces communities through our Armed Forces Covenant following recent legislation changes and look for ways to improve our support to this community group.
10. The action plan will also be updated to reflect Cabinet's response to the recent motion passed at Council calling for greater recognition and understanding of trans and non-binary identities.

## CA13

11. The Council recognises the importance of listening and learning from those with lived experience. The framework was developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and this year we will be looking to engage in greater depth with communities on the issues that they face.

### Future Plans:

12. At the end of this year, the Council will have reached the mid-way point in the lifecycle of the Including Everyone framework. It is recognised that the Council has a long-term vision to tackle inequalities across the county and so the framework will be updated during this year in order to capture the short, medium and long-term aims for the Council's inclusion agenda. This will also seek to address the request from the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to better establish the link between the EDI action plan and the Council's strategic priority to tackle inequality.
13. The framework will also be updated to reflect the need to foster equity in addition to equality, diversity and inclusion. Equity relates to the need to create equal outcomes for all community members, whereas equality relates to having equal status, rights and opportunities.

### Highlights from 2021-22

14. A more detailed summary of achievements in 2021-22 has been included in the Annual Performance Report, which is also on the agenda for this meeting. However, achievements of particular note were:
  - Reciprocal mentoring pilot scheme: a nine-month reciprocal mentoring scheme was completed with members of the Council's senior leadership team and representatives from the Council's Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) staff network. The pilot scheme was designed to enable frank and challenging conversations about race and racism to take place with senior managers. Phase 2 of the scheme, which includes a wider roll-out across the organisation will be implemented this year.
  - Updated policies and procedures: during the staff consultation in developing the framework, staff said that policies and procedures for reporting bullying and harassment were not as clear as they could be. Human Resources have since re-designed and publicised these policies, which are now known as the 'Zero Tolerance' and the 'Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination' policies.
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion calendar: this has been developed to plan communications around key inclusion and awareness days across the council. There has been a focus on telling first person stories to highlight the lived experience of staff of particular events and occasions.

## CA13

15. Additionally, the Council was shortlisted for a Diversity and Inclusion award by the Local Government Chronicle award for the development of the Including Everyone framework.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

16. The EDI action plan intersects with a number of the Council's strategic priorities in particular:
- Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
  - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of our residents
  - Support carers and the social care system
  - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential
  - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory democracy
  - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

### **Financial Implications**

17. There are no direct budgetary implications associated with the action plan. Any budgetary implications that arise from actions will be managed within individual directorates and service areas as required.

### **Legal Implications**

18. The development of the action plan seeks to support the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty which are as follows:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Comments checked by:

## Staff Implications

19. The delivery of actions within the action plan will be delivered within existing council resources.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

20. The development of the action plan will have a positive impact on equality, diversity and inclusion both for people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and more widely. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

## Sustainability Implications

21. The action plan will have a positive impact on sustainability and contains specific actions in relation to engaging with a diverse range of groups when developing climate action plans. A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed.

## Risk Management

22. There is a risk that by not delivering an action plan, the Council would not be fulfilling its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Claire Taylor  
Corporate Director Customer, Organisational Development and Resources

Annex: Annex 1 – Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-23

Background papers: [Including Everyone – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#)

Contact Officer: Emily Schofield, Head of Strategy

June 2022