

‘Including Everyone’ – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Oxfordshire County Council Initial Action Plan

This document sets out the initial action plans that support Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council’s ‘Including Everyone’ Framework. The Framework is divided into three sections.

- Section One – Inclusive Communities
- Section Two – Inclusive Service Delivery
- Section Three – Inclusive Workforce

Section One: Inclusive Communities

Goal	Work with communities to help them thrive			
Desired Outcome	We are working directly with local underrepresented community groups to tackle inequality, ensure that our Council is representative of the community it serves, and that everyone understands our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
1.1	Engage with, and support, local community groups and organisations	We will take the time to listen, learn and build strong relationships with community groups. We recognise that we don’t fully understand the barriers that underrepresented groups face in the local communities and we want to work together to fix this.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	Planning during October 2020 for a November 2020 engagement launch date
1.2	Promote inclusive behaviour with service users	We will clearly explain on our website, social media platforms and in our buildings how important equality, diversity and inclusion is to our staff and customers by setting out how you can expect to be treated by us and how we expect customers to respect us in return.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications and Director of Digital and ICT	Start October 2020 with quarterly updates

1.3	Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage	Both Councils recognise the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on particular marginalised communities. We will listen and work with local community groups to co-produce solutions aimed at tackling racism and discrimination in our society.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	Planning during October 2020 for a November 2020 engagement launch date. Starting October 2020 as part of engagement exercise in 1.1
1.4	Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage	We will analyse the ways in which the public engage with local democracy such as speaking at Council meetings or standing as Councillors and will actively encourage underrepresented groups to consider standing for elections and participate in public meeting debates, including those who may be digitally excluded.	Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets and Investment/Principal Governance Officer	Planning during October 2020 for a November 2020 engagement launch date. Starting October 2020 as part of engagement exercise in 1.1
Goal	Work with partners to tackle disadvantage in our communities			
Desired Outcome	Our suppliers and organisations working on our behalf understand that to work with us they need to share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We are working constructively with partner organisations to make sure that we reduce inequality and discrimination in our local communities.			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
1.5	Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chain and strategic partnerships	We will improve our commissioning and procurement procedures so that organisations working on our behalf or supplying us understand our equality, diversity and inclusion principles and that we expect them to act in the same way. We will also improve the way we monitor our contracts to make sure that EDI is part of the way we monitor progress.	Corporate Director for Finance/Head of Procurement and Contract Management	Work currently underway, initial decision expected December 2020

		In our standard documentation we will present the Council's revised EDI policy and the expectation that contractors will share our aspirations.		
1.6	Promote and encourage inclusive behaviour for future generations	We will work with schools to promote and encourage inclusion and adopt inclusive practices.	Director for Children's Services	Underway and ongoing
1.7	Work with partner organisations to understand diverse needs and create inclusive communities	We will work collaboratively with our city/district and health colleagues to understand the barriers around the county in relation to housing/homelessness, employment and deprivation and how it disproportionately affects particular groups	Director for Public Health	Ongoing. Work to build ward profiles of the 10 most deprived areas currently underway
1.8	Work with partner organisations to understand diverse needs and create inclusive communities	We know that the effects of climate change are more likely to negatively impact on people living in areas of higher deprivation and we will address this, including through our Climate Action Framework	Corporate Director Planning and Growth/Director for Planning and Place	Starting October 2020 and reporting at least annually

Section Two: Inclusive Service Delivery

Goal	Our information and buildings are accessible for all			
Desired Outcome	We will have improved the way we present information about our services so that it is accessible to everyone, including those who do not have access to the internet. We have worked with our communities to make sure our buildings are welcoming and accessible to all now and in the future.			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
2.1	Ensure our information, website and digital services are accessible for all; including those digitally excluded	We will proudly promote our equality, diversity and inclusion principles on our websites with statements from our senior leaders and clearly set out the steps we are taking to create inclusive communities and services	Director of Digital and ICT	October 2020 onwards
2.2	Ensure our information, website and digital services are accessible for all; including those digitally excluded	We will ensure that customers know how to contact our services and we take an inclusive approach to designing the most suitable customer experience based on their feedback.	Director of Culture and Customer Experience	Initial work underway with additional activities planned during Q3 and Q4 2020-21
2.3	Ensure our information, website and digital services are accessible for all; including those digitally excluded	We will introduce a clear and consistent policy regarding the translation of our information into languages reflecting residents' needs	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	February 2021
2.4	Ensure our information, website and digital services are accessible for all; including those digitally excluded	We will make sure during the current website review that our websites are as accessible as possible for everyone. We recognise that we have a new legal requirement to make them better for everyone who uses them.	Director for Digital and ICT	Underway, updating quarterly

2.5	Take action to make our buildings accessible to all residents and staff	As we look to re-open our buildings and develop a new Property Strategy, we will take this opportunity to create more accessible spaces for services to be delivered.	Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets and Investment /Director for Property, Investment and Commercial Facilities Management	Underway as part of a new Property Strategy
Goal	Our services use good data and engage with users to plan and meet their diverse needs			
Desired Outcome	We gather the right data about people who use our services and we do this consistently across the organisation. We work together with people who use our services so that we can improve them for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable.			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
2.6	Better understand those using services and their needs by collecting their information and feedback	We will improve the ways we collect information about our residents, including the forms we have on our website, customer satisfaction surveys, complaints and equality monitoring information about our residents. We will do this by making our questions consistent across the Council and clearly explaining why we ask for this information. We will then be able to use this information to improve the services we provide to people.	Information Services Manager/Director for Culture and Customer Experience	Starting November 2020, additional activities from January 2020.
2.7	Better understand those using services and their needs by collecting their information and feedback	With our improved ways of collecting data, we will be able to use this information to improve the services we provide for residents. This will include understanding how we can safely share information with other organisations and partners and understand any trends or gaps in service provision for underrepresented groups.	Information Services Manager/Director for Culture and Customer Experience	Starting November 2020, anticipated 9-12 month roll out.

2.8	Engage residents, those using services, and community groups, when planning services	We will continue to improve the quality of our services by co-producing with our residents. We have an ambition for as many services as possible to be co-produced in the future.	Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Housing/Co-Production Lead	Underway
2.9	Plan and deliver services that promote inclusion	The Council has a legal requirement to understand the impact that decisions will have on people with certain protected characteristics. To ensure that we take this approach from the start of the decision-making process, we will deliver a new holistic equalities impact assessment tool so that we can understand and mitigate against any negative impacts on the decisions we take	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	Underway

Section Three – Inclusive Workforce

Goal	Our workforce is inclusive, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve			
Desired Outcome	We are seen in our community as an employer of choice in our local community. We have increased the diversity of our organisation by recruiting the most talented individuals who share our values and commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
3.1	Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities	We will closely monitor progress against our action plan and regularly communicate updates to staff and the public using a 'You Said, We Did' approach. We will review and add new actions at least once a year and we will make sure we involve Councillors, staff networks and union representatives to constructively challenge the progress we think we have made.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	To be undertaken as part of an annual review process

3.2	Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities	We create more opportunities for staff, particularly those in underrepresented groups in our management, to have shadowing and mentoring opportunities so that everyone can reach their full potential.	Director for Human Resources	Start December 2020 and review April 2021
3.3	Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities	We will introduce a mentoring for diversity scheme.	Director for Human Resources	Underway
3.4	Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities	We are currently working on project called 'Delivering the Future Together' and as part of that we will create new values for our organisation. Actions from this will include incorporating our new values into our recruitment methods and staff annual reviews.	Director for Human Resources	Programme has commenced, timeframe is anticipated to be 12-18 months
3.5	Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce	We will celebrate and raise awareness of different inclusion occasions across the year, working with our staff networks to celebrate role models and learn from each other.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications	Underway
3.6	Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce	We are proud of the awards we hold that recognise our commitments to equality and inclusion. We will work to maintain our Armed Forces Gold Award, improve our position in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and work towards achieving level 3 in the Disability Confidence Scheme, moving up from level 2. We will agree how we can get external verification of our progress around race equality.	Director for Human Resources	Underway

3.7	Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce	We will work to understand and tackle the barriers to accessing more senior roles for those from diverse backgrounds, including those from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background or those with a disability.	Director for Human Resources	12 months
3.8	Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential	We will deliver the actions in the Equality in Employment 2020 report which includes providing clear and consistent communication to staff about why we collect equalities information and how we will appropriately use this data to improve our services so that they have confidence to disclose information. Our aim will be to increase the numbers of staff who provide this information so we can respond to it.	Director for Human Resources	Underway, reported annually.
3.9	Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential	Develop a clear set of expectations for staff and managers that recognises the importance of staff networks, mentors and champions. This will include recognising the time commitments that come with these roles and that staff taking on these additional responsibilities should be supported by their line managers to do so	Director for Human Resources/Director for Children's Services	Underway
3.10	Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential	We will ask an independent organisation to assess our Equality Diversity Inclusion approach, we will set out actions resulting from the assessment in our plans and report on them.	Director Communications, Insight and Strategy	Underway

Goal	Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge to be inclusive			
Desired Outcome	Staff at all levels of the organisation have received training about equality, diversity and inclusion and the impact of unconscious bias. We have embedded equality, diversity and inclusion into our organisational values, policy development and staff clearly understand and are delivering work that promotes inclusive services.			
Item	Commitment	Action	Lead	Timescale
3.13	Identify and tackle discrimination in all its forms	We will provide clear and consistent communication to staff about our approach to tackle bullying and harassment through our Dignity at Work policy. This will include how staff can report any instances and how these will be investigated	Director for Human Resources	Underway
3.14	Provide managers with the skills to support employees with different needs and plan inclusive services	We know that some staff do not currently feel comfortable to have conversations about equality inclusion issues or completing impact assessments so we will write guidance, create tools and deliver training to help address this and make it part of our everyday working life	Director of Strategy, Insight and Communication	May 2021
3.15	Train our staff to identify and avoid unconscious bias and deliver inclusive services	We will deliver unconscious bias training to CEDR, ELT and Councillors in the first instance and then deliver the messages from this training across the Councils	Director for Human Resources	Underway, training has been delivered to CEDR, ELT and Councillors.