

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026 - 30

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
26 January 2026

PART I

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
(ADCCC)**

1 Summary

- 1.1 At Full Council on 12 December 2023, the 2023-26 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was adopted. This report presents an updated draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and draft Equality Objectives for Three Rivers District Council.
- 1.2 This report details the changes that have been made to the Policy.
- 1.3 Additionally, the report reflects on work undertaken to achieve the 2022-26 Equality Objectives, summarises the community engagement undertaken to develop the 2026-30 draft Equality Objectives and invites councillors to review and amend these as required.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That:

The committee review, and if required amend the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for 2026-30.

The committee review, and if required amend the draft Equality Objectives for 2026-30.

The committee agrees to a public consultation on the draft Policy and Objectives.

That public access to the report be immediate

That public access to the decision be immediate.

Report prepared by: Shivani Davé, Partnerships and Inclusion Manager

3 Details of Equality Objectives

- 3.1 In 2022 the current Equality Objectives were agreed. These are listed below with some examples of work undertaken to achieve them. Comprehensive details of work undertaken can be found in the published annual [Equality Duty Information Reports](#).

- 3.1.1 To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training.

- 3.1.1.1 In January 2025, TRDC received a Disability Confident Leadership accreditation by demonstrating our approach to recruitment practices, workplace adjustments, staff development and inclusive culture.

- 3.1.1.2 The council employs a Housing Navigator, a role that promotes employment, training and education for individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by offering one to one support.
- 3.1.1.3 A Career's Fair was held in March 2024 at Watersmeet Theatre. This was attended by over 300 sixth form students from local schools and colleges and over 120 young people, parents, and adults seeking employment or skills development. 23 exhibitors were present, representing industries such as, renewable energy, retrofit and construction, green technology, engineering, film production, conservation and more.
- 3.1.1.4 To improve access to services for all residents
- 3.1.1.5 The council provides an assisted collection service for bin collections, usually supporting elderly residents or those with reduced mobility or a disability.
- 3.1.1.6 Play spaces have been co-designed with local primary schools to create inclusive spaces and includes sensory, natural play such as planting, willow dens and sand. Pathways and access routes, along with inclusive play equipment such as basket swings are also part of the design for play spaces.
- 3.1.1.7 Council run Healthy Hubs provide a one stop shop for residents to access signposting, referrals and information about services and support available in their local area. 4 hubs operate regularly in the district, with pop ups held across the district.

- 3.1.2 To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
 - 3.1.2.1 We work closely with and fund Watford and Three Rivers Trust to provide support directly to local charities. These organisations tend to work at a local level with community groups and building on these relationships improves council understanding of those communities.
 - 3.1.2.2 Lincoln Drive Temporary Accommodation Garden project was led and delivered in consultation with those living on site and in partnership with the New Hope Trust.
 - 3.1.3 To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.
 - 3.1.3.1 Watersmeet Theatre hosted South Asian Heritage event showcasing culture, classical dance and music whilst sharing the stories of families from South Asia. Tickets to the event were free to encourage residents from all socioeconomic demographics to attend.
 - 3.1.4 Transition Streets programme in Three Rivers delivered an inclusive community-led approach to household carbon emissions reductions, which focuses on personal connections between residents and uses financial savings as the driver of change.
- 3.2 To inform the creation of new objectives, community engagement was undertaken between August and September 2025 with diverse groups. This was not formal consultation, but engagement to identify themes from concerns and challenges expressed by people with protected characteristics.
- 3.3 This was achieved through a combination of face to face and virtual engagement with community members and partners and their feedback was collated..

3.4 The list below is not exhaustive of all community groups, partners or representatives in Three Rivers, however, the formal public consultation we propose to hold will create the opportunity for all residents to provide feedback.

3.5 Local communities were engaged in the process of developing the proposed objectives. In addition to the engagement, officers have reviewed actions undertaken against the 2022-26 objectives to understand impact and achievement. Actions previously undertaken can be found in the annual [Equality Duty Information Reports](#).

3.6 The draft objectives aim to demonstrate progression from the 2022-26 objectives.

3.7 The draft objectives for 2026 – 30 are:

3.7.1 Understanding and building trust with communities.

3.7.1.1 Since 2022 officers have developed relationships and established networks with Community Leaders and residents, however, data from the 2024-25 residents survey indicates there are still opportunities to further build trust with residents. Additionally, it is important for officers to maintain the links and relationships that have been developed with community groups – particularly as we approach Local Government Reorganisation in 2028.

3.7.2 To make council services fair and reachable for everyone, encouraging & supporting partner organisations to do the same.

3.7.2.1 This objective will contribute to develop the work achieved to improve accessibility to council services. Actions relating to this objective have been the most comprehensive over last four years, but there is still more we can do. This objective takes into consideration our role as local leaders and encourages officers and councillors to positively use our position to influence our partners and stakeholders to achieve the same.

3.7.3 To promote a diverse workforce and inclusive culture.

3.7.3.1 This objective focusses on the council's workforce. In 2023 a project was undertaken to develop "Values and Behaviours" within the council. Following this, an internal Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group was developed to promote inclusion and wellbeing and includes an officer representative from each service area.

3.7.3.2 Initiatives delivered by this group in 2025 include internal communications for LGBTQ History Month, a corporate "Cultural Day" during National Inclusion Week where officers were invited to share foods representing their traditions, and a community event for Purple Tuesday.

3.7.3.3 This objective prioritises the corporate commitment to continue this area of work.

3.7.4 To deliver and fund services that are grounded in fair conduct and practice.

3.7.4.1 This extends the principle of making services fair and reachable to our procurement processes, service level agreements and grant agreements. This objective embeds equity and fair access of our services in delivery.

4 Details of changes to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

- 4.1 Sub-headings have been re-worded to better reflect the content and overlapping sections have been combined to avoid duplication.
- 4.2 The section on legislation has moved towards the beginning of the policy and now includes information on the meaning of “due regard” and definitions.
- 4.3 The policy outlines the council’s commitment to create opportunities where everyone can thrive. This requires attention to the different starting points, experiences, and barriers that can influence access to services. It supports the continuation and development of workstreams to tailor support to meet varied needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. By addressing specific disadvantages and ensuring everyone has a fair chance, we foster a more stable, just, and prosperous community.
- 4.4 The council already does this through Healthy Hubs – one stop shops to improve accessibility to council and community based services; Digital accessibility tools – ability to change the language and spoken language to communicate information on our website; Notice boards – use of social media platforms as well as noticeboards and local community groups to share information ensures those who aren’t on social media or without digital access are well informed; Reasonable adjustments for officers who have long term health conditions and/or disabilities to support their delivery.
- 4.5 The council’s commitments now include supporting people who experience discrimination, and those that are duplicated through legal duties have been removed.
- 4.6 Information on the new objectives has been included within the policy.
- 4.7 Addition of the opportunity for councillors to attend the Equalities Forum, and review of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) when making council decisions.
- 4.8 Additional responsibility for Corporate Management Team (CMT) to ensure their team is represented in Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group. Responsibility of championing equality has moved from managers to CMT, to ensure corporate leadership.
- 4.9 Combining responsibility for Strategy and Partnerships Team & Human Resources, and adding responsibility to provide council officers, and Community Infrastructure Levy applicants, with support and guidance when developing Equality Impact Assessments. Additional responsibility to lead and administrate the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group and production of the annual EDI plan to achieve Equality Objectives has been included.
- 4.10 Human Resources responsibilities include publication of the workforce monitoring report, gender pay gap report, and any subsequent reports relating to ethnicity and disability pay gap following the publication of the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill.
- 4.11 Addition of Staff responsibility to complete e-learning (this is already mandatory for staff and the training will be updated to reflect the new policy). Responsibility to support and advocate for people with protected characteristics has moved from managers to all staff, to embed tackling inequality in daily business.
- 4.12 The use of Equality Impact Assessments has been included across all roles.
- 4.13 Creation of a section summarising the aims and work of the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group.

- 4.14 New infographic map to communicate indices of deprivation by Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). This infographic utilises 2025 data instead of 2019, when indices of deprivation had last been calculated by Office of National Statistics.
- 4.15 Amendment to the monitoring and evaluation section, to emphasise the impact of EIA's in identifying barriers, and steps taken to mitigate these. Reference to the publication of residents anonymised equalities information has been removed. This will not be published, however, teams will scrutinise the data they collect to understand under-representation in accessing their services and address barriers.

5 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 Recommendations are proposed to ensure the council complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.2 Failure to develop and publish Equalities Objectives or an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy put the council at risk of failing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.3 Failing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty can result in reputational damage, legal costs and judicial review.
- 5.4 The absence of objectives and a policy reduces the council's ability to identify and target disparities, increasing the likelihood of unequal access or poorer outcomes for protected groups.
- 5.5 This can lead to discrimination claims, loss of trust, poorer service uptake among marginalised communities and weakened partnerships with funders and community organisations.

6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 6.2 The recommendations in this report do not relate to the achievement of any performance indicators.
- 6.3 The purpose of this proposed policy is to adhere to the duties of the council under the Public Sector Equality Duty. At the end of one year, it is anticipated that the policy will have resulted in the development of an action plan, and reported on progress made against it.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this policy. The scale to which actions can be undertaken in relation to each objective will be dependent on officer resource and capacity. Individual service projects or work is included within their service plans as well.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Three Rivers District Council is legally required under the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to:
 - 8.1.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination
 - 8.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity

8.1.3 Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

9 Equal Opportunities Implications

9.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

9.2 Impact Assessment

EqIA found that actions undertaken as a result of the Policy and draft objectives would support in addressing barriers experienced by people with one or more protected characteristics.

10 Staffing Implications

10.1 Officer time in development of consultation.

10.2 Officer time in community engagement and promotion of consultation.

10.3 Scale of delivery of initiatives and actions to achieve objectives, and to undertake duties required by Strategy and Partnerships is dependent on officer resource and capacity. Currently 0.5FTE is grant funded until February 2027. Implications would exist after this date.

11 Environmental Implications

11.1 None arising.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 Work undertaken to achieve the Equality Objectives can support the reporting of hate crimes and incidents, particularly with communities that are currently reluctant to report. This may result in an increase in reported crimes or incidents, however, the increase would reflect an increase in public confidence to report.

13 Public Health implications

13.1 Work undertaken to achieve the Equality Objectives can build partnerships and opportunities that will positively contribute towards addressing health inequalities.

14 Customer Services Centre Implications

14.1 None arising

15 Communications and Website Implications

15.1 Officer time in development of consultation.

15.2 Officer time in social media posts and news stories to promote consultation.

15.3 Involvement of Communications Team in the development of resources. Internal resources would require uploading to intranet, public initiatives would require more in depth support from the Communications Team.

16 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

16.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

16.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Strategy and Partnerships service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
Failure to agree Policy for consultation	Delay in consultation	Policy development has allowed for sufficient time to mitigate this risk. Opportunity at Committee for Councillors to amend the policy and then agree	Treat	6
Failure to agree Objectives for consultation	Delay in consultation	Policy development has allowed for sufficient time to mitigate this risk. Opportunity at Committee for Councillors to amend the objectives and then agree	Treat	6

16.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely Domestic Likelihood	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	4	8	12	16
Medium Likelihood	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
Low Likelihood	Low	Low	Medium	High
	2	4	6	8

	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
Impact				
Low ----- ➤ Unacceptable				

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)
3 (Critical)
2 (Significant)
1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely ($\geq 80\%$))
3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Remote ($\leq 5\%$))

16.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

Data Quality

Data sources:

Equality Act 2010

Data checked by:

Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships.

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	x

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026 - 30

