

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
18 JULY 2022

PART I

**6. EQUALITIES OBJECTIVES REVIEW
(CED)**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to Three Rivers District Council. It requires the Council to consider how different people will be affected by its activities, helping it to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs. The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations which came into force on 10 September 2011. The specific duties require the Council to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives. We published our first set of objectives in March 2012.
- 1.2 This report recommends new objectives which will cover the period from 2022-2026 and includes highlights of work undertaken across the council which contributed to the delivery of the previous objectives. Objectives must be published at least every four years.
- 1.3 This report includes, findings from a public consultation held on the proposed objectives.

2 Summary of Main Points

- 2.1 The objectives will form part of the Councils Comprehensive Equality Policy when reviewed. The review of the objectives began in autumn 2021. Although delayed due to the pandemic, the Council continued to deliver the current objectives. A presentation was delivered to the Equalities Sub Committee in September 2021 reviewing work undertaken by the Council in relation to existing Objectives. In June 2022 proposed objectives for 2022-26 was shared with the Equalities Sub Committee including background research on the equalities objectives.
- 2.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to prepare and published, every four years one or more specific and measurable equality objective(s) which will help them further the three aims of the Equality Duty.
- 2.3 These three aims are:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2.4 It is for the council to decide what and how many equality objectives it should set. When deciding what equality objectives to set, the Council should take into account:

- Evidence of equality issues across all our functions;
- Issues affecting people sharing each of the protected characteristics; and
- The need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations.

2.5 The recommended objectives have been developed by:

- Looking at the outcomes of service achievements against the current objectives
- Feedback from residents, employees and customers over recent years (for example the Prejudice, Discrimination, Micro-aggressions and Hate Crime in marginalised groups Survey and Annual Resident Survey)
- Outcome of the Workforce Monitoring Report (reported annually)
- Our response to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Published annually on the Three Rivers District Council Website in January)
- Feedback from agencies through various partnership meetings on community need.
- Consultation with the Equalities Sub-Committee.

2.6 Once the draft equality objectives were reviewed by the Equalities Committee in June these were consulted on with residents and the Councils' partners and are presented in this report for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.7 If agreed, actions for each service area will be developed to track and manage the council's achievements against each of the objectives and this will be reviewed and evaluated annually

3 Current Objectives for 2018-2022

3.1 The Councils current Equalities Objectives are:

- Promoting Community Leadership & Community Cohesion
- Improving Community Engagement
- Promoting Equality In Service Delivery
- Promoting Equality Of Opportunity In Employment & Training
- Evaluating The Success Of Our Equalities Commitments

Achievements

3.2 A comprehensive review of the Equality Objectives 2018-2022, has been conducted with all services. Some highlights of the review and the achievements against each of the objectives, are provided below.

3.2.1 Promoting Community Leadership and Community Cohesion

- A Prejudice and Discrimination survey was undertaken with the results driving a programme of community engagement and the development of the Hate Crime action plan.
- Regular communication takes place through partnerships bulletin and Local Strategic Partnership alongside community engagement work.
- The Council hosts a Homelessness Forum with partners.

3.2.2 Consultation / Community Engagement and Communication

- All customer surveys include questions on the respondents' demographic info.
- An Equality Duty Information Report is annually published.
- Council meetings: Publish meetings and agendas, Right to speak, Large print, Hearing loop.
- A Pensioner's Forum and Council E-newsletter have been developed with readership increasing and good feedback received.

3.2.3 Promoting Equality in Service Delivery

- Adults With Complex Needs Pilot and subsequent Community Support Service has been established to support people with complex problems.
- A Serious Violence Strategy has been developed, addressing the issue and impact of poverty, social isolation and trauma

3.2.4 Promoting Equality of Opportunity in Employment and Training

- Equality and Diversity training is provided to all staff. An updated course is being reviewed.
- Development of the iPerform system encourages training and development, as well as career progression, to be reviewed and discussed throughout the year

3.2.5 Evaluating The Success Of Our Equalities Commitments

- Service Level Agreements are reported on annually and shared with members through the Members Information Bulletin.
- The council has adopted Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia statements.
- The Council set up the Equality Sub-committee in 2020.

4 Proposed New Objectives

4.1 The proposed new objectives presented below have taken into consideration the Council's achievements to date, the impact of the pandemic, community engagement, consultations and research into the objectives of other similar local authorities.

4.1.1 The proposed Council Objects for 2022-26 are:

- To promote Equality Of Opportunity In Employment & Training
- To improve equality and access to services for all residents.
- To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities.

- To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.

4.2 A snapshot consultation was launched on Friday 10 June, following the Equalities Sub Committee Meeting, and closed on Sunday 19 June to allow us to take into consideration residents and partner feedback to the proposed objectives

4.2.1 The survey was shared directly with partners and with the wider public on social media. In addition, officers from the Community Partnerships teams undertook face to face conversations in South Oxhey, Rickmansworth, Abbots Langley and Carpenders Park. .

4.2.2 A total of 80 participants completed the survey with 95% agreeing with the first objective, with 93.75% agreeing with the others.

4.2.3 Suggestions received for improvement included; the need to address digital isolation as part of proposed objective “To improve equality and access to services for all residents”.

4.3 Other feedback related to training in relation to the impact of long term health conditions on staff and residents.

5 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 The recommendations in this report adhere to the conditions of the Equality Duty, requiring the council to prepare and publish measurable objectives.

6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

6.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the report and that actions arising from the report can be met with existing budgets

8 Legal Implications

8.1 The Equality Act 2010 (“The Act”) requires all public bodies to publish equality objectives it thinks it should achieve to meet the general equality duty under section 149 of the Act.

9 Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

9.1 None currently arising.

10 Equal Opportunities Implications

10.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
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Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No
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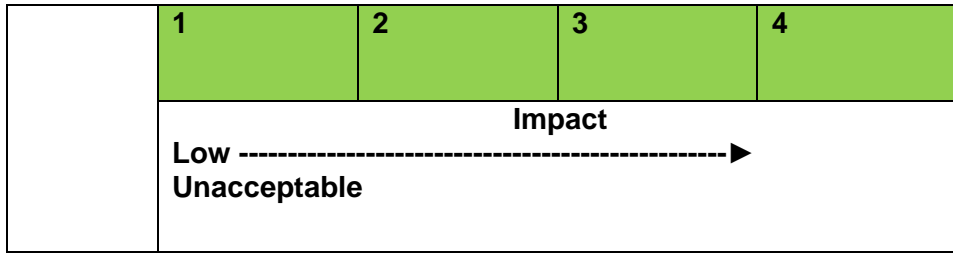
11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

11.1 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.

11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships service plan(s). Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
Risk that the council fail to produce and publish Equalities Objectives for 2022-26.	Service failure occurs as objectives are not being monitored and managed. Three Rivers District Council is referred to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty	Agree proposed objectives.	Treat	6

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



Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.3 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

11.4 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.

12 Recommendation

12.1 That Members Review and agree the proposed Equality Objectives.

Report prepared by:
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Data Quality

Data checked by:

Gordon Glenn

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	