

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Refresh of Equality Objectives 2016-2020

**REPORT OF:** Jane Robinson, Chief Executive

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. Public sector organisations have been required to publish their equality objectives by 6 April 2012 and at least every 4 years thereafter. Cabinet is asked to endorse and recommend the Council to approve its refreshed equality objectives which aim to address the challenges of inequality across Gateshead, and to demonstrate the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

### **Background**

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a requirement on public bodies to demonstrate compliance with each part of the PSED. This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct which is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty.

### **Refresh of Equalities Objectives**

3. Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that equality objectives should be viewed as part of an organisation's business planning processes, to ensure they are aligned to business priorities, and are an integral part of business performance.
4. The approach to refreshing the Council's equality objectives has therefore been to review the analysis undertaken as part of the development of the Council Plan 2015-2020, including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Council's Workforce Strategy 2015-2020.

The Council Plan identified the following areas of inequality:

- Poverty and deprivation
- Gateshead the place – the quality of the physical and natural environment
- Quality and number of jobs
- Health outcomes
- Levels of ambition and aspiration

## **Monitoring Progress**

5. Since 2012, the Council has monitored its progress in achieving the equality objectives via six monthly performance updates to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, as part of the corporate performance management framework. In addition, the Council publishes an annual report which includes this information to demonstrate compliance with the PSED.
6. A review of the Corporate Performance Management Framework has been undertaken to test the relevance of the current suite of strategic indicators to support delivery of the Council Plan 2015-2020. As part of this work, the strategic indicators that were developed to measure the current equality objectives are also being reviewed, and where required, new indicators developed. The findings of this review will be subject of a future report to Cabinet.

## **Proposal**

7. A new suite of equality objectives are proposed with the aim of reducing the areas of inequality identified in paragraph 4 above. In addition, a key priority from the Workforce Strategy has been included to reinforce the Council's commitment to ensuring its workforce is innovative, creative, diverse and inclusive.
8. It is therefore proposed the new equalities objectives shown below are adopted for the next four years:
  - To support vulnerable groups most at risk of poverty and deprivation
  - Gateshead the place – to improve the range of housing across Gateshead for vulnerable groups
  - To promote healthy and inclusive communities
  - To increase levels of ambition and aspiration of vulnerable groups across Gateshead
  - To develop the Council's workforce which recognises the diversity of the community it serves

## **Recommendation**

9. Cabinet is asked to endorse the refreshed equality objectives and recommend them to Council for approval.

For the following reason:

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling areas of inequality in Gateshead, whilst ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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## Policy Context

1. The Council Plan 2015-2020 has outlined the challenges faced by Gateshead in terms of inequality. The refreshed equality objectives have been designed to address these inequalities and support the delivery of the shared outcomes described within the Council Plan.

## Background

2. The Public Sector Equality Duty required public sector organisations to publish equality objectives by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter. The Council's current equalities objectives, which are due to end in April 2016, were agreed as part of the Council Plan 2012-2017 and are identified below:
  - Diversity and equality within the workforce
  - Narrow the attainment gap of vulnerable young people
  - Support more people into employment to improve economic, digital and financial inclusion
  - Improve activity to safeguard vulnerable adults and raise awareness of hate crime and domestic violence
  - Deliver targeted support to carers – BME carers, LGBT carers, young people who are carers and carers within the Jewish community
  - Improve the take up of social care and health support among BME communities
  - Promote positive emotional and mental health amongst the school age population

## Consultation

3. Consultation has taken place with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, as well as the Support Cabinet Member for Diversities and Equalities.

## Alternative Options

4. There are no alternative options with regard to the report as the recommendation supports the Council's general duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## Implications of Recommended Option

### 5. Resources

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- b) **Human Resource Implications** – The equality objective relating to the workforce will support the Council's ability to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

- c) Property Implications** – There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
6. **Risk Management Implications** – There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.
7. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The equality objectives have been developed with the aim of improving the lives of Gateshead’s residents.
8. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising directly as a result of this report.
9. **Health Implications** – There are no direct health implications arising directly as a result of this report.
10. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no direct sustainability implications arising directly as a result of this report.
11. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no direct human rights implications arising directly as a result of this report.
12. **Area and Ward implications** – There are no direct area and ward implications arising directly as a result of this report.

### **Background Information**

13. The following background papers have been used to inform this report:
- Objectives and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities, Equality and Human Rights Commission
  - Council Plan 2015-2020
  - Workforce Strategy 2015-2020