

Corporate Equality Objectives 2022-25

We recognise the value and worth of everyone who lives and works in the borough and we will actively promote diversity and equal opportunities for all, regardless of age, race, disability, religion or belief, sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, income or wealth, upholding the provisions of the [2010 Equalities Act](#).

We will actively promote:

- LGBTQ+ rights
- the celebration of multiculturalism reflecting the cultural diversity within the borough and beyond
- religious toleration of all religions, beliefs and none
- the needs of young and older people across the Borough
- the right of all disabled people to access services without discrimination and to recognise that not all disabilities are visible
- gender equality and the use of gender-neutral language wherever appropriate in all council publications
- positive role models for minorities and those groups affected by discrimination
- the elimination of abusive language and behaviour towards vulnerable groups across the borough, including bullying, discrimination and harassment
- the eradication of poverty and social disadvantage within the borough.

To ensure we are meeting our commitments the Council has an agreed set of **Equality Objectives**.

- Provide high quality public services which are accessible to all; delivered fairly and with an understanding of where need is greatest.
- Work with partners to develop cohesive communities where equality, diversity and inclusion are respected and championed in accordance with the principles above and discrimination is eliminated.
- We actively welcome into Waverley those world citizens who are seeking refuge in the UK from war, repression, natural disasters, extreme hunger and poverty.
- Welcome and respect difference and recognise the performance benefits that a diverse and engaged workforce brings and build a culture in which the contribution everyone makes is valued, recognised and celebrated.
- People feel safe to challenge discriminatory behaviour and discriminatory language and we respond swiftly and transparently to any such allegations.

We will focus our activity in the next two years on the following outcomes:

- We engage with and understand our communities to ensure our services are accessible and focused on the greatest need and that steps are taken wherever possible, to eliminate poverty and social disadvantage.

- By using feedback we identify unfair treatment and take steps to correct this, taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- The Council has a culture in which the contribution everyone makes is valued, recognised and celebrated and everyone feels comfortable to be themselves.
- We provide an accessible and inclusive working environment and practices where all are treated fairly, consistently and with respect.
- The Council has an effective equality impact assessment process to ensure our services and policies do not discriminate or unfairly impact our residents and staff
Each of these commitments will be implemented through the following Action Plan.

Waverley Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022/23

The following action plan focuses on achieving our priority outcomes for 2022-2023. Progress will be monitored by the Corporate Equality Group at each of its meetings and the Plan will be reviewed at six months and after one year.

We engage with and understand our communities to ensure our services are accessible and focused on the greatest need.

	Actions	By when	Lead Officer	What we did	Evidence	Further Actions	RAG Rating
1.1	Use insight gathered from 2021 Census to identify key EDI issues and disseminate this information to services.	Starting when Census information is released in spring 2022	Louise Norie				
1.2	Ensure there is up-to-date EDI guidance on the Hub on Backstage, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EqIA toolkit and guidance • an updated set of monitoring questions • Quarterly workforce stats • Use of language 	1 May 22 1 April 22 Quarterly 1 June 22	Louise Norie/Sally Kipping				
1.3	Adhere to the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations and take action to remedy shortcomings on the Council's website reported by the Cabinet Office survey in 2021.	April 30 2022	Vanessa de Chazal				
1.4	Implement provisions of the Armed Forces Act 2021 coming into force in the summer of 2022.	August 2022	Louise Norie/ Michael Rivers				

2. By using feedback we will identify unfair treatment and take steps to correct this, taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

	Actions	By when	Lead Officer	What we did	Evidence	Further Actions	RAG Rating
2.1	Following the conclusion of any upheld complaints involving allegations of discrimination relating to protected characteristics reported through the Corporate Complaints process or grievances, these will be reviewed to consider lessons learnt by a group consisting of HR Manager, Chair of CEG and Corporate Policy Manager.	Review progress quarterly – March, June, September, December.	Sue Petzold/ Sally Kipping				
2.2	Ensure staff are aware of the 'Report it' mechanism on Backstage and any complaints of harassment and bullying are responded to quickly and action taken appropriately.	Review progress quarterly – March, June, September, December.	Tinaz Erenler				
2.3	Review the Active Citizens initiative at the end of the first year to ensure it is meeting its objectives.	November 2022	Kate Ferguson				
2.4	Undertake a biennial staff survey to gain insight on Waverley's role as an equal opportunities' employer and follow this up with relevant focus groups.	April 2023	Sally Kipping				

3. The Council has a culture in which the contribution everyone makes is valued, recognised and celebrated and everyone feels comfortable to be themselves.

	Actions	By when	Lead Officer	What we did	Evidence	Further Actions	RAG Rating
3.1	Enable more staff to feel confident to declare information on protected characteristics so as to improve the quality of our staffing data and continue to publish quarterly workforce analysis.	October 2022	Sally Kipping				
3.2	Analyse the need and identify the most appropriate EDI training for all staff and Councillors including procurement of quality training and measures to ensure its completion. Undertake training.	August 22 Oct/ Nov 22	Kate Ferguson/ Sally Kipping				
3.3	Support the development of staff networks, where there is an interest, for people with protected characteristics to develop their role and profile.	Review June, October 2022 and February 2023	Sally Kipping				
3.4	Support Councillors to build their knowledge and awareness of EDI issues including establishing an informal Councillor EDI Group.	June 2022	Cllr Penny Marriott/ Louise Norie				
3.5	Continue to promote EDI areas of interest throughout the year, raising awareness of different protected characteristic groups, including the celebration of festivals and marking anniversaries and promoting relevant national initiatives.	Throughout 2022. Review at each CEG meeting.	Corporate Equality Group				

4. We provide an accessible and inclusive working environment and practices where all are treated fairly, consistently and with respect.

	Actions	By when	Lead Officer	What we did	Evidence	Further Actions	RAG Rating
4.1	Provide on-going support for colleagues with disabilities who require reasonable adjustments to deliver their roles effectively.	Review progress quarterly – June, September, December, March.	Sally Kipping				
4.2	Strengthen our recruitment processes to focus on attracting the best talent and minimise potential sources of bias, such as diverse recruitment panels, anonymous shortlisting.	Review progress quarterly – June, September, December, March.	Sally Kipping				
4.3	Continue monitoring and taking action to narrow the Gender Pay Gap.	December 2022	Sally Kipping				
4.4	Ensure our approach to agile working benefits all staff and supports improved productivity and wellbeing.	March 2023	David Allum/ Sally Kipping				

5. The Council has an effective equality impact assessment process to ensure our services and policies do not discriminate or unfairly impact our residents and staff

	Actions	By when	Lead Officer	What we did	Evidence	Further Actions	RAG Rating
5.1	Ensure services are equipped to assess, and understand the importance of, the equality implications of their policies and service decisions through Equality Impact Assessments.	Review progress at each CEG meeting.	Louise Norie				
5.2	Ensure equality impact assessments are undertaken to inform the decision making process by monitoring committee reports going to SMT, Management Board and Committees and that the sign off process for EqlAs is clear.	Review progress at each CEG meeting.	SMT/ Louise Norie				
5.3	Ensure training is available on equality impact assessments and taken up by all staff involved in service development.	May 2022	Kate Ferguson				