

**Committee Name:** Cabinet

**Committee Date:** 09/06/2021

**Report Title:** Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy 2021 - 2022

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cllr Karen Davis
<b>Report from:</b>	Executive director of community services
<b>Wards:</b>	All wards
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

### **Purpose**

To consider the Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy 2021 – 2022.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy 2021 – 2022.

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets the People living well corporate priority.

This report addresses the following strategic actions in the Corporate Plan:

- Support people in Norwich to feel safe and welcomed
- Provide means for people to lead healthy, connected, fulfilling lives, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
- Ensure there is a range of cultural, leisure and social opportunities and activities for all.

This report helps to meet the following objectives of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan:

- Modernising the council; reimagining local services
- Supporting the most vulnerable
- Arts, culture, and heritage
- Harnessing social capital

View the [Corporate Plan 2019-22](#)

View the [COVID-19 Recovery Plan](#)

## **Report details**

### **Introduction**

1. Norwich City Council is committed to equality for all residents of Norwich. This is through the delivery of accessible, fair services, as an employer, contractor of services and a community leader. The council celebrates diversity, and the contribution different groups make to the vibrant city of Norwich.
2. This means that we and the services that we deliver, and contract out do not discriminate against someone because of perceived difference. It also means that we take an active role as a leader in the community and remove barriers to participation and access for all members of the community. We can do this through implementing robust policies.
3. Taking a positive approach to diversity creates a cycle of improvement in service provision. By demonstrating we value all aspects of the community we are strengthening it, as a whole.
4. This commitment is reflected in the draft policy attached to the report, which draws from the existing equality policy, the council's Covid-19 blueprint for recovery, and current initiatives being developed. The scope of the policy has been broadened to include diversity and inclusion as well as equality, taking account of the council's ambitions as an organisation, and for the city.

### **Objectives**

5. To be fully compliant with specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 the council must:
  - a) annually publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating its compliance with the Equality Duty
  - b) set specific, measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
6. The council has articulated its equality objectives as part of its annual equality information reports until 2018 and via regular reporting to cabinet on the progress of the reducing inequalities strategy. These go beyond the Equality Act considerations and were last agreed by cabinet in March 2020.

7. Considering Covid-19 and the unprecedented impact on the lives of the people of Norwich, a revised set of specific objectives have been developed alongside clear actions on how we will achieve them and measure success.
8. The four objectives are:
  - a) Develop a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy
  - b) Redesign council services and reshape teams around the needs of users, creating more joined up and accessible services which are in tune with the changing needs and behaviours of those we serve
  - c) Understand our communities, and celebrate and respect diversity
  - d) Recruit, develop and retain a diverse and representative workforce

### **Monitoring**

9. Progress against the objectives will be reported to the corporate leadership team and cabinet in line with the council's performance reporting timetable.
10. The policy covers the next 12-month period, after which the objectives will be reviewed and amended accordingly following completion of the current internal equalities review as well as being informed by current political priorities and the revised corporate plan for 2022 – 2023.

### **Consultation**

11. The cabinet member for social inclusion has been consulted with their being incorporated in the policy version attached to this report.
12. HR have been involved in shaping the current objectives, and their input is included in the body of the policy document.
13. We are acting on audit recommendations, so no further consultation is required in this instance.
14. Consultation with the monitoring officer will form part of the work to draft revised objectives for 2022 – 2023.
15. Wider consultation with stakeholders and residents will form part of the development of the Equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy due to be published in June 2022.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial and Resources**

16. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2019-22 and Budget.
17. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

## Legal

18. The council has a requirement to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The publication of the revised policy which contains specific and measurable equality objectives enables us to be compliant with the duty.

## Statutory Considerations

<b>Consideration:</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and Diversity	The policy provides information about how the council aims to deliver accessible, fair services, as an employer, contractor of services and a community leader; and how it discharges its duties under the Equality Act, which allows for identification of areas for improvement.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	<p>Health and wellbeing: the policy provides information about the council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion for all residents of Norwich. Taking this positive approach allows for a cycle of improvement in service provision and demonstrates we value all aspects of the community.</p> <p>Financial inclusion: the policy provides a commitment to assess the needs of, and engage with, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups to ensure services do not negatively impact them.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Human Rights Act 1998: the policy forms part of the council's approach to making sure it and the services it delivers, and contracts out do not discriminate against, victimise, or harass someone because of perceived difference.
Children and Adults Safeguarding	The policy supports the council's Safeguarding policy statement: Norwich City Council considers that all children and adults, whatever their age, culture, gender, origin, sexual orientation, skills, ability and beliefs have the right to protection from abuse. We have a duty to promote the welfare of all and safeguard them from harm as far as reasonably possible.
Environmental Impact	None identified

## Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Legal risk	Failure to have 'due regard' in relation to the Equality Act 2010 could mean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a judicial review of decision making</li><li>• incurring unnecessary costs to the council</li><li>• reputational damage</li><li>• unconscious discrimination against a part of the city's community</li><li>• developing services that do not meet the needs of our communities.</li></ul>	<p>The policy allows identification of risks around liabilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>An action is being developed and will be used to monitor progress of delivery and achievement of success.</p> <p>Progress will be reported to CLT Assurance on a quarterly basis.</p>

## Other Options Considered

19. Not applicable.

## Reasons for the decision/recommendation

20. It is recommended that cabinet approve the Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy to ensure that we are compliant with the legal requirements of local authorities in regard to their Public sector equality duty, and that the council's commitment to this agenda and its ambitions as an organisation, and for the city, are prioritised.

## Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	Annabel Scholes, 01-06-21
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	Geoff Wild, 27-05-21
Relevant Executive Director	Louise Rawsthorne, 24 May 2021

## Background papers:

None

## Appendices:

Draft Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy 2021 - 2022

## Contact Officer:

Name: Emma Smith

Telephone number: 01603 989575

Email address: [emmasmith@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:emmasmith@norwich.gov.uk)

## **Appendix: Draft equality, diversity and inclusion policy 2021 - 22**

### **Commitment**

1. Norwich City Council is committed to equality for all residents of Norwich. This is through the delivery of accessible, fair services, as an employer, contractor of services and a community leader. The council celebrates diversity, and the contribution different groups make to the vibrant city of Norwich.
2. This is about making sure we and the services that we deliver, and contract out do not discriminate against someone because of perceived difference. It also means that we take an active role as a leader in the community and remove barriers to participation and access for all members of the community. We can do this through implementing robust policies. For example:
  - taking appropriate action if unlawful discrimination is identified
  - consulting with community groups, such as disability awareness groups
  - supporting and promoting community and cultural events, for example black history month.
3. Taking a positive approach to diversity creates a cycle of improvement in service provision. By demonstrating we value all aspects of the community we are strengthening it, as a whole.

### **Our ambition for Norwich**

4. Norwich has a long history of being a radical, innovative city. We are increasingly recognised for our strong economy, quality of life and vibrancy. But we know there are some parts of our city where there is inequality and poverty that we must continue to challenge and tackle.
5. The [Norwich 2040 City Vision](#) brings the whole city, its people, businesses and institutions working together to make the Norwich of 2040 the best place to be. It will be a fair city where people care about equality; there is a fair system; and communities are diverse. Equality, diversity and inclusion underpins the vision's work and associated partnerships

### **Our ambition as an organisation**

6. Norwich City Council is at the heart of the city. We work creatively, flexibly and in partnership with others to create a city of which we can all be

proud. We provide good services to our residents, visitors and businesses, whilst enabling people to help themselves and ensuring that those who need extra help can access it.

7. Our ambition as a council is to become an agile, collaborative, learning organisation where:
  - a. we celebrate and respect equality, diversity and inclusion
  - b. residents are at the heart of everything we do
  - c. we understand and listen to our communities
  - d. employees take responsibility and feel empowered to succeed
  - e. we attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce
  - f. resources are aligned to deliver our corporate priorities
  - g. we build confidence across the organisation, our partnerships and support networks
  - h. people can work and live in a safe and inclusive environment.

## **Covid-19**

8. Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the lives of the people of Norwich. Its consequences have already and will continue to reshape the city, impacting in particular those who were already experiencing deprivation across all protected characteristics.
9. It is important that the council not only focuses on how, as an organisation, it recovers and responds to challenges faced as a result of the pandemic but also the leading role it plays in the wider recovery of the city. The council published its [blueprint for recovery](#) in June 2020.

## **Legislation**

10. The Equality Act 2010 provides the framework of protection from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment. Norwich City Council aims to meet its legal requirements under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:
  - a) eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
  - c) foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
11. This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:
  - a) The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
  - b) The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require local authorities to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

## Duration

12. Equality is a theme running throughout our [Corporate Plan 2019-22](#) which supports our vision to make Norwich a fine city for all by putting people and the city first.
13. This policy covers the 12-month period of 2021/22. During this time, work will take place on developing a revised policy and objectives that will be informed by:
  - a. engagement and consultation with communities, partners and employees
  - b. a council wide equalities review
  - c. political priorities for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and a revised Corporate Plan 2022/23
  - d. covid-19 blueprint for recovery

## Governance

14. Cabinet will:
  - a. ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this policy are published and communicated throughout the council, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
  - b. delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a quarterly basis to the corporate leadership team.
15. The council's equality, diversity and inclusion lead is the strategy manager. They will:
  - a. work with the equality representatives across the organisation and other relevant officers, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed
  - b. promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst officers and members
  - c. maintain a watching brief on appropriate equality and diversity legislation and case law
  - d. report back to the senior leadership team and corporate leadership team regarding any issues
  - e. monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to the senior leadership team and the corporate leadership team
  - f. support HR in identifying any employee and member training needs
  - g. meet with the Cabinet's portfolio holder for social inclusion to discuss any issues and progress in achieving the objectives
16. All managers and team leaders are expected to have due regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out later in this document.



17. Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken for each report submitted to Cabinet, and Equality Impact Assessments accompany major decisions made at the council.

## **Service provision**

18. In our service provision, the council will:
- a. communicate information clearly using plain language and different formats, such as translated services, large print, or Braille where appropriate
  - b. make sure our services are accessible
  - c. assess the needs of, and engage with, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups to ensure services do not negatively impact them
  - d. monitor use of services
  - e. promote positive images to counter discrimination
  - f. respond proactively to reports of discrimination and harassment
  - g. promote good relations between community groups
  - h. monitor policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness for disadvantaged groups
  - i. monitor effectiveness of contractors in their commitment to equalities
  - j. consult internally and externally regarding our equality commitments.

## **Employment**

19. As an employer we will:
- a. ensure that recruitment, retention, redundancy and redeployment policies and processes are fair and transparent
  - b. make reasonable adjustments so that potential barriers are removed for disabled employees
  - c. regularly review our policies and procedures to make sure they comply with legislation and good practice
  - d. publicise our commitment to equality to potential job applicants
  - e. be robust in our response to complaints of discrimination or harassment from employees
  - f. make clear our requirements of employees regarding equality and inclusivity for all
  - g. encourage applications from people with non-standard qualifications and lived experience.
20. From our employees we expect:
- a. adherence to the council's code of conduct
  - b. a workplace environment that respects individual differences and is free from discrimination or harassment
  - c. the customer to be at the heart of everything we do
  - d. individuals to treat each other with dignity and respect
  - e. inequality to be challenged
  - f. equality of opportunity to be promoted.

## Objectives

<b>Objective 1</b>	<i>Develop a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy by June 2022</i>
<b>Why</b>	<i>To ensure that our services are accessible to all, promoting a City that is diverse, inclusive, and fair, and representative of the communities we serve.</i>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage and consult with a wide range of residents across all of the different characteristics, from all of our diverse communities, partners and employees to ensure that the Strategy is as meaningful as possible for Norwich.</li> <li>- Improve the quality of information we collect and how we use it.</li> <li>- Gather robust evidence and ensure transparency</li> <li>- Continue to identify and review inequalities that have been exacerbated by Covid-19 for all protected characteristics and identity action to address any impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Who</b>	Strategy and Enabling Teams

<b>Objective 2</b>	<i>Redesign council services and reshape teams around the needs of users, creating more joined up and accessible services which are in tune with the changing needs and behaviours of those we serve by January 2023.</i>
<b>Why</b>	To create a council which is sustainable, diverse and inclusive with an organisational structure and culture which is fit for the future.
<b>How</b>	Through the Future Shape Norwich programme
<b>Who</b>	Strategy and transformation team

<b>Objective 3</b>	<i>Understand our communities and celebrate and respect diversity.</i>
<b>Why</b>	To enable us to support people and our communities to understand each other and their differences such that they can live, work and study in a healthy, inclusive and safe environment.
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to work with stakeholders to promote social cohesion</li> <li>- Work more collaboratively with partners to embed early intervention and prevention, across the system</li> <li>- Develop a Citizen Participation Blueprint which looks at how the council can work with communities across the city to enable them to have their voices heard, influence decisions, be involved in finding solutions to challenges and issues that affect them and actively help to frame future plans.</li> <li>- Further develop the existing Reducing Inequalities Target Areas initiative by creating a revised programme and plan for delivery with clearly defined outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Who</b>	Strategy and Enabling teams

<b>Objective 4</b>	<i>Recruit, develop and retain a diverse and representative workforce</i>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To ensure that managers and team leaders have the confidence to support and engage the diversity of customers and residents in the City</li> <li>- To provide equality of opportunity and improve employee voice on equality issues</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To have a greater representation of employees with protected characteristics across the council's workforce in line with the profile of the city's residents (based on Census 2011 and revised data following Census 2021).</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and improve employee skills by providing Leading Equality and Diversity Training which is designed specifically for managers and team leaders.</li> <li>- Develop an action plan to address our workforce profile.</li> <li>- Introduce Employee Networks to champion equalities, build relationships and ensure colleagues are engaged and supported.</li> </ul>
<b>Who</b>	HR Team

### Monitoring arrangements

10. The monitoring arrangements for the council's equality policy are:
- a. the strategy team will update the equality information we publish every year
  - b. this document will be reviewed by the strategy team at least every four years.

### Appendix: Types of discrimination, protected characteristics, and protection from discrimination.

<b>Types of discrimination</b>	<b>Prohibited conduct</b>
Direct discrimination	Being treated less favourably than someone else due to a perceived difference.
Indirect discrimination	The way something is done means you are treated less favourably than someone else due to a perceived difference.
Discrimination arising from a disability	Where the discrimination is as a result of the disability
Perception discrimination	Being treated less favourably than someone else because of a perceived difference, regardless of whether it is true.
Discrimination by association	Being treated less favourably than others because of your association with someone with a protected characteristic (which protects carers).
Victimisation	Being treated unjustly or unfairly when making a complaint or taking out a grievance or helping someone else to make a complaint in relation to a protected characteristic.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic.

<b>Protected characteristics</b>	
Age	A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect

	on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).</p> <p>The Equality Act only protects you from discrimination at work because you are married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>In some specified circumstances an employer can refuse to employ you because you are married or in a civil partnership if the work is for the purposes of an organised religion, for example as a Catholic priest.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race (ethnicity)	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion or belief	Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex (gender)	In the Equality Act, sex can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls. There are some circumstances when being treated differently due to sex is lawful, for example, where being a particular sex is essential for a job, or an organisation is taking positive action.
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

### **Situations in which a person is protected from discrimination**

Under the Equality Act a person is protected from discrimination:

- when you are in the workplace
- when you use public services like healthcare (for example, visiting your doctor or local hospital) or education (for example, at your school or college)
- when you use businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants, and cinemas)
- when you use transport
- when you join a club or association (for example, your local tennis club)
- when you have contact with public bodies like your local council or government departments.

