



**OPEN REPORT
COUNCIL**

Council 28 November 2024

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND PLAN 2024-26 AND 2022-24 OUTTURN

Report of Director of Corporate & Customer Services

Report Author and Contact Details

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Wards Affected

All Wards

Report Summary

The District Council published its Equality, Consultation & Engagement Plan in September 2022, which set out the proposed Equalities actions and activities for the period 2022-24. This report provides a summary of the progress and achievements against the actions set out in the Equality Action Plan 2022-24.

This report also seeks approval for the new Equality Objectives and Plan, covering the activities proposed for the period 2024-26.

Recommendations

1. That progress against the actions in the Equality Action Plan 2022-24 (Appendix 1) be noted.
2. That the proposed Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-26 (Appendix 2) be approved.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Equality Action Plan outturn 2022-24

Appendix 2 Equality Objectives & Plan 2024-26

Background Papers

None

Consideration of report by Council or other committee

N/A

Council Approval Required

Yes – new Equality Objectives & Plan for 2024-26

Exempt from Press or Public

No

Equality Plan 2022-24 Outturn and Equality Objectives & Plan 2024-2026

1. Background

- 1.1 The public sector equalities statutory duty comprises a general equality duty and a specific duty. Derbyshire Dales District Council must comply with both. The general duty requires the District Council to have due regard in the exercise of all its functions to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between all persons
 - Foster good relations between all persons.
- 1.2 The District Council must therefore ensure due consideration is given to the aims of the Duty in all its decisions. The paragraph on 'other considerations' at the end of every committee report reminds Members that although Officers have had regard to equality issues when preparing reports, Members should also consider equality issues in order to meet the Equality Duty.
- 1.3 The specific duty requires the District Council to publish:
 - Equality information annually about its workforce and service users to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty
 - Equality objectives (drawing on this information) at least every four years that it needs to achieve to meet the aims of the general equality duty, focusing on its priority equality issues.
- 1.4 The District Council has a comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which details how the Council meets the requirements of equality legislation and provides the context for the Equality Objectives & Plan and the Consultation & Engagement Plan. The Equality Policy was adopted in September 2021.
- 1.5 The Equality, Consultation and Engagement Plan which set out the activity planned for the period 2022-24 was approved by the Governance and Resources Committee on 22 September 2022. The Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-26 (Appendix 2) sets out a new range of objectives and actions, linked to the new Corporate Plan 2024-28.
- 1.6 There are strong links and overlaps between the aims, priorities and actions of the Council's work on Equalities and on Consultation and Engagement. Previously, the District Council has presented this work together but for the 2024-26 period, the outturns and future plans will be presented separately to allow easier consideration of the different elements.
- 1.7 In particular, this allows greater consideration of the new Equality Objectives, which can be kept in place for the 4-year period of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 if required. The Equality Action Plan covers the 2 year period 2024-26 so this can be updated more frequently.

2 Equality Objectives 2024-26

- 2.1 The Council's Equality Objectives for 2020-24 were agreed by the Governance and Resources Committee on 30 September 2021, informed by the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2020-24.
- 2.2 The Council's new Corporate Plan 2024-28 was approved by Council on 25 July 2024. The key priorities are:
- A financially sound, fair and responsive District Council
 - Resources and services to enable communities to flourish
 - A thriving environment in the Derbyshire Dales
 - Housing that meets the needs of Dales residents
 - Prosperous and sustainable Dales communities and businesses
- 2.3 The following Equality Objectives are designed to support these key corporate priorities:
1. To be a Council that listens to and engages fairly and effectively with all Derbyshire Dales communities, including the Council workforce.
 2. To provide high-quality, equitable, accessible and customer-centred services which understand and meet the needs of all Derbyshire Dales communities.
 3. To support a thriving environment that can be accessed, enjoyed and appreciated by all Derbyshire Dales residents and visitors.
 4. To support the provision of housing that meets the needs of all Derbyshire Dales residents, carefully considering the needs of diverse communities and people with protected characteristics.
 5. To support prosperous and sustainable Derbyshire Dales communities and businesses, which offer opportunities for employment and growth to all residents and visitors, including those with protected characteristics.
- 2.4 These Equality Objectives seek to build both on the work done within service areas and on corporate Council-wide efforts to provide equitable and accessible environments and services.

3 Progress: Equalities 2022-24

- 3.1 As required by legislation, updated equality information was published on the District Council's website in January 2024. A proportionate approach to the collection and publication of data continues to be taken, with a particular focus on key service user satisfaction data disaggregated by relevant protected groups.
- 3.2 The Equality Action Plan 2022-24 set out performance measures and targets, detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The majority of the identified targets have been fully or partly achieved. Some targets were achieved slightly later than expected.

3.4 Successes to highlight include;

- During both 2022/23 and 2023/24, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were successfully completed for all policies or procedures identified as requiring one. Due to changes in the Local Plan timetable, EIAs on Local Plan policies will continue into 2024-25.
- The Customer Access Strategy was adopted in July 2023 with a new Customer Charter, which focuses on leaving no one behind in our service offer. Whilst the number of digitally excluded residents is low, the Council is committed to provide equality of service to all customers.
- More than 20 services were made available online and fully trackable.
- The new DDDC website was completed in December 2022 and compliant with accessibility standards set by the Government Digital Service.
- 20 new Council homes for rent were secured by March 2024.
- 40 homes have now been acquired with allocations to homeless households, Ukrainian refugees and Afghan refugees.
- 19% of new homes built during 2023/24 were considered affordable housing, against a target of 15%.
- By March 2023, debt and welfare advice had been provided to 381 vulnerable households, against a target of 300. By March 2024, the total number of vulnerable households supported was 448, with £1,274,134 of support provided alongside Age UK and CAB.
- Three regular weekly youth diversionary projects run in identified hotspot areas of Matlock, Ashbourne & Darley Dale. Positive feedback has been received from police, Whitworth Centre, Town Council and local people.

3.5 The following targets were not met fully;

- Work continues to identify a suitable permanent Traveller site.
- The target to provide adaptations to the homes of 70 disabled people by March 2023 was slightly missed with a total of 68 adaptations improving access into and around the homes of disabled people being provided. 53 more adaptations had been fully completed in total by March 2024 but several more adaptations have been completed onsite although they cannot be marked as fully completed, due to delays with other processes.

4 Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-26

4.1 The Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-26 provide a structured framework for the District Council's Equalities activities. The 5 Equality Objectives and associated actions are set out in Appendix 2.

4.2 Key areas of Equalities work in this period will include:

- Providing all service information in a variety of accessible ways to meet the needs of our customers.
- Completing thorough Equality Impact Assessments at the start of and throughout the development of **all** new policies, procedures and reviews to fully understand the impacts on people with protected characteristics and document the findings.
- Supporting work to set up a new Traveller site
- Completing the biennial Residents Survey in March 2025

- Providing a high-quality Waste and Recycling service
- Implementing the outcomes of the Car Park Review and the Public Toilet Review
- Developing a new Leisure Strategy, which includes outreach/rural provision and leisure centres.

5 Equality Impact Assessments

- 5.1 To minimise the risk of legal challenge and to ensure that the potential impact upon protected groups is taken into account in the District Council's decision-making framework, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are prepared where needed. Completed Equality Impact Assessments are summarised and presented for Members' review when new or revised policies are being considered at Committee or Council meetings. Completed Equality Impact Assessments are also published on the District Council's website to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-26 identifies actions that are the responsibility of a number of Directorates and Officers and will be led by Senior Managers.

7. Timetable for Implementation

- 7.1 The plans cover the period from April 2024 to end March 2026. They include a simple table to show the deadlines for implementing actions. Reports to Council will be made on progress annually.

8. Policy Implications

- 8.1 The plans link to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and the Consultation Strategy 2020-27.

9. Finance and Resource Implications

- 9.1 Resources implications were considered at the time of adopting the plan and on an ongoing basis for individual actions across services.
- 9.2 The costs of addressing the statutory requirements in relation to equality objectives and plans are contained within existing service budgets. As such the financial risk is low. However, failure to comply with the relevant statutory requirements may expose the District Council to legal challenge and therefore the potential for higher financial risks.

10. Legal Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Legal implications were considered at the time of adopting the plan and on an ongoing basis for individual actions across services.
- 10.2 There are 2 decisions recommended to be taken as set out at the beginning of this report. Should decisions be taken in line with the

recommendations, the legal risk of challenge to these decisions has been assessed as low.

10.3

11. Equalities Implications

11.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be made for the actions contained in the plans, as each action is begun.

12. Climate Change and Biodiversity Implications

12.1 A CCIA is not necessary as much of the content of this report is reporting the results of past actions. The remainder of the report contains action plans. For each action consideration as to whether a CCIA is required will be made as the action is begun.

13. Risk Management

13.1 Risk assessments for each proposal contained within the Plan will be made as they are begun.

Approvals obtained from:

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Paul Wilson	19/11/2024
Director of Resources/ S.151 Officer	Karen Henriksen	14/11/2024
Monitoring Officer (or Legal Services Manager)	Kerry France	20/11/2024