

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Equality Action Plan 2019 - 2023

This Action Plan has been developed following a cross cutting audit of the impact of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council work on the nine equality group categories. The approach has led us to appreciate the diversity of approaches across the council services to meet the needs of different equality groups. We have included links to higher level strategies which address equality and diversity related issues rather than itemise a range of actions.

The action plan addresses the need for the Council to create a new corporate approach to equality and diversity issues across all business planning areas. The audit of inequalities has addressed the core issues of focusing on the customer both internally and externally. We believe transforming the customer experience to ensure that every customer counts will take time but will make our services more equitable, inclusive and accessible.

Identified Priorities:

- Design, commission and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to our customer's needs.
- Raise awareness of equalities issues and tackle prejudices, both internally and externally
- Attract, recruit, retain and progress a diverse range of employees in a culture which celebrates diversity and inclusion
- Provide a working environment where employees are treated with fairness, dignity and respect

| Action Ref. Number | Issue Identified | Desired outcome(s) | Actions | Timescale | Responsibility |
|--------------------|--|--|--|-----------|----------------|
| A | Strategic Issues: Impacting on the organisation as a whole | | | | |
| 1 | Need for a process to ensure that equality of opportunity and good relations are incorporated and mainstreamed at the strategic level of the Council | Section 75 duties integrated and mainstreamed into business planning processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and incorporate equality and diversity targets for all aspects of the council's business processes • Introduce an equality toolkit which covers all information staff need to effectively manage equality and diversity issues • Ensure good relations strategy is delivered , reported on and communicated to staff • Incorporate rural needs assessment into the equality assessment process | 2019 | |
| 2 | Need to tackle both persistent and emerging inequalities in a strategic manner | <p>Improved awareness and understanding of inequalities and the potential impact of decision-making on each s75 category</p> <p>Compliance with Equality, Disability and Rural needs legislation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete timely and thorough review of equality screening exercises of all new policies. • Monitor and regularly report on the progress and implementation of the equality action plan • Review issues identified on an annual basis and develop actions to address them as required • Review the Equality Scheme in line with ECNI guidelines • Manage Rural Needs legislation across the council | 2020 | |
| 3 | Need to remain continually vigilant of issues affecting our disabled customer experience both internally and externally | <p>Creation of a customer experience which is accessible environment for staff and customers</p> <p>Better relationships and partnerships with a range of customers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a corporate approach to enhancing the customer experience • Establish a disability action plan addressing core issues for the disabled customer internally and externally • Monitor and regularly report on progress of the Disability Action Plan to the ECNI | Annually | |

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| 4 | Need to encourage SMT and Elected Members to address equality in all aspects of their work | Equality and diversity mainstreamed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Leaders and Elected Members attend leadership equality training following guidance from the ECNI ▪ Embed equality and diversity in new corporate plan | 2020 | |
| 5 | Need to ensure procurement processes are delivered equitably across all services | Legislative and equitable compliance with procurement systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of procurement policy • Equality and diversity issues are included in procurement processes • Compliance and improved recording processes to address FOI queries | 2019/20 | |
| 6 | Need to improve the co-ordination of all S75 monitoring information in relation to our services to all customers | Creation of a robust baseline of equality related information for use by staff in all aspects of the council business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a corporate approach for the collection and recoding of equality monitoring data • Create an equality database • Communicate with and train staff in the use of the database for equality screening and decision making • Review and publish equality monitoring outcomes | 2021 2021 2021 | |
| 7 | Need to encourage better equality data sharing across other community planning partner organisations | <p>Improved customer user experience in all aspects of the council work</p> <p>Improved understanding of S75 needs among other agencies</p> <p>Improved profile and reputation among S75 groups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community partners to share relevant data • Identify other issues under the responsibility of external agencies which adversely affect the S75 categories | 2023 2023 | |

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| B | Communications, Information, and Engagement Issues: Impacting levels of interaction, among staff and customers | | | | |
| 8 | Need to improve engagement with customers across all S75 categories | Improved understanding of issues impacting different groups of people leading to a better-informed decision-making process and improved customer service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include plan for active engagement with S75 groups in all policy making processes ▪ Prepare corporate guidelines to improve customer engagement and experience ▪ Embed customer engagement into business planning processes | | |
| 9 | Need to provide accessible channels of communication to reflect diverse customers' needs | <p>Greater opportunities for two-way communication</p> <p>An accessible online service</p> <p>Translated documents of interest available on request</p> | <p>Investigate all communication channels currently in use and identify barriers likely to affect any of the S75 groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Test website accessibility in line with new website accessibility legislation ▪ Develop digital transformation programme ▪ Assess and address key inequalities as they arise ▪ Develop appropriate online and written communication materials ▪ Assess opportunity to present alternative formats in advance | | |
| 10 | Need to raise levels of awareness and understanding of the full range of services and activities among staff | <p>Improved knowledge and understanding of the work of the staff</p> <p>Better understanding among staff of available support services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a new communications programme for staff including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction & regular training, - Planned events & speakers - Use of intranet & e-zines | 2021 | |

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| C | Skilled and committed workforce: Impacting on levels of understanding among our own staff | | | | |
| 11 | Need to continue to ensure all staff are fully trained to deal with the range of equality issues affecting Council services both internally and externally | <p>Better informed policy development and decision-making</p> <p>Improved awareness of the particular needs of S75 categories</p> <p>A more responsive support package available to all staff</p> <p>Equality is mainstreamed into all job descriptions and appraisal systems</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to deliver a suite of equality and diversity related training for all staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality awareness training - Disability awareness training - Equality screening training - Front line training and - EQIA training - Unconscious bias - Customer service training ▪ Staff appraisal system introduced and incorporates equality issues ▪ Introduce Equality and diversity into job descriptions | | |
| 12 | Need to have better information about our workforce which enables us to take appropriate action to make improvements in areas where we notice that there are issues with attracting, recruiting, retaining and progressing people with particular protected characteristics. | <p>Improved understanding of diversity of workforce</p> <p>Composition of the staff better reflects the society in which it operates</p> <p>Staff are aware of the support that is available to them</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a workforce monitoring process ▪ Review internal recruitment processes to identify and remove potential barriers ▪ Introduce a staff survey to capture a range of equality and diversity related issues ▪ Develop a more comprehensive workforce strategy | | |

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| 13 | Need to improve levels of engagement with staff from S75 groups | Staff feel welcomed and valued Improved Staff participation and engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a staff engagement network | | |

| D Participation Issues: Impacting on people seeking to use our services | | | | | |
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| 14 | Need to improve participation levels among under-represented groups in a range of the Council's activities and Services | <p>Improved Service use and reduced risk of exclusion among marginalised groups</p> <p>Improved relationships with relevant S75 representative organisations</p> <p>Improved profile for the Council, and understanding of its activities among women, young people, people with disabilities and people from minority ethnic backgrounds</p> <p>Greater participation of all parts of society in all aspects of the Council's work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes of engagement with groups representing young people, particularly those from deprived and socially excluded communities Programme of engagement with groups representing older people, particularly those from rural communities Programmes of targeted actions to encourage participation among disabled people Implementation of equality and accessible programmes related to leisure programmes Implementation of cultural strategy and associated action plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver strategy plan to improve good relations (link to Good Relations Strategy) Improve community networks relating to waste management services Links to core strategies : cultural strategy/ leisure Work with Every Customer Counts Initiative with ECNI to develop range of projects targeted at any identified group who face barriers to access Improved monitoring data across all functions Review membership and satisfaction of equality forums | | |