
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

28 May 2019

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: Equality Mainstreaming Progress Report 2017 - 2018 and Equality Outcome Report

Purpose: To advise on the Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcome Reports 2017 – 2018 as required by legislation under the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendation: That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises and notes the Equality Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Reports.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A full equality mainstreaming report is published every 2 years, along with a progress report on the Equality Outcomes adopted by the Council and its public sector partners. Reports are produced to evaluate progress and satisfy requirements to publish information in relation to equality and diversity issues under the Equalities Act 2010 and the Specific Duties (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Equality Mainstreaming report is attached at [Appendix 1](#) and the Equality Outcomes report is attached at [Appendix 2](#). This report contains information on how we are mainstreaming the equality duty, equality outcomes, the assessment and review of policies.

2. Background

- 2.1 From April 2013, public sector organisations were required to publish equality information once every 2 years. The last main report was published in April 2017 (covering January 2015 to December 2016). These two new equality reports cover the period from January 2017 to December 2018 (the time lag in reporting is in relation to gathering employee information) and were published on the Council's website before the 30 April 2019 deadline.

2.2 Legal Requirements

The Equalities Act 2010 (The Act) sets out a general duty for every public authority, often referred to as the three needs, which requires organisations to –

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

- 2.3 The public sector duty covers a number of 'characteristics' to which everyone has at least five, these are known as protected characteristics and are – Age; Sex; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sexual Orientation; Marriage and Civil Partnerships (although this last category only applies to eliminating discrimination).
- 2.4 Additional 'Specific Duties' were added in 2012 (in Scotland) to help authorities meet the three needs outlined in the general duty, some of which are -
- Report on mainstreaming equality duty
 - Publish equality outcomes and report progress
 - Assess and review policies and practices
 - Gather and use employee information
 - Publish gender pay gap information
 - Publish statements on equal pay
- 2.5 The report at Appendix 1 is the Equality Mainstreaming Progress Report for 2019. The report reflects the points contained in 2.4 above, which include –

Mainstreaming

- 2.5.1 Section 4 of the report highlights the importance of mainstreaming including the introduction of a Children's Rights section to the Equality Impact Assessment process and the Fairer Scotland Duty, which focuses on socio-economic inequality. The Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process is a key tool for mainstreaming equalities within the Council.
- 2.5.2 E-learning modules on Deaf and Sight Loss Awareness were also added to the employee I-learn platform
- 2.5.3 Following a motion passed by Cabinet on 12 December 2017, Human Resources initiated a complete review of the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and Procedure with the aim of introducing a zero tolerance policy towards any form of harassment.
- 2.5.4 To support the work of the Corporate Equality Group, three elected members, one from each of the main parties were nominated onto the group in 2018.

Employee Information

- 2.5.5 A summary is contained in section 6, with a full breakdown in Appendix 1 of the Mainstreaming Report. The employee information section provides an indication of the number of employees by protected characteristic, however within each category there is always a number of 'not disclosed' responses, for instance for disability monitoring 18% of staff fall into this category, meaning we do not know their disability status at time of joining the Council. Employee information is partly gathered through the 'My Job Scotland' portal, where the provision of this information is optional. The proportion of staff 'not disclosing' has fallen from 22% in 2016 to just under 19% in 2018, which indicates a higher number of staff who are comfortable in disclosing their disability status.

- 2.5.6 The number of staff indicating a disability increased from 2% in 2016 to 2.23% in 2018. This is in part in response to the skills for life programme, which focused on providing short-term employment experience for people with a disability and is a good example of focused approach targeting a specific group of people.
- 2.5.7 During 2017 employee statistics on Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation were added to the report and will be monitored moving forward.

Pay Gap figures for Gender, Race and Disability

- 2.5.8 North Ayrshire has one of the lowest pay gap differences for gender across local authorities in Scotland, during 2018 this was 1.5%. Pay gap information for Disability and Race (other ethnicity) show positive trends of 3.81% and 7.96% respectively in favour of these protected characteristics.

Equality Outcomes

- 2.5.9 The report in Appendix 2 provides detailed information on the progress being made towards the shared equality outcomes and actions by the partners and also short summaries of other equality related work being carried out across the Council.

Along with other public sector partners across Ayrshire, the Council agreed to work towards 4 Shared Equality Outcomes. These are –

Outcome 1 – In Ayrshire, people experience safe and inclusive communities.

Outcome 2 – In Ayrshire, people have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services.

Outcome 3 – In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life.

Outcome 4 – In Ayrshire, public bodies will be inclusive and diverse employers.

Equality Developments

- 2.5.10 During 2018 and 2019, a number of processes have been or are being introduced to support the continued mainstreaming of equality within the Council; these include the introduction of a new online Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process; a review and refresh of the online equality awareness training programme and the introduction of an impact assessment module during 2019. There has been consultation on and adoption of a British Sign Language plan and nomination of Elected Members onto the Corporate Equality Group during 2018.

Summary of Key Highlights

2.6 Highlights from Equality Mainstreaming report (Appendix 1) and Equality Outcomes Report (Appendix 2)

- Introduction of e-learning courses on Deaf Awareness and Sight Loss Awareness
- An increase of 2% from 2016 to 2018 in the number of accessible properties (for people with a disability) that are classed as fully or reasonably compliant under British Standard 8300.
- Pay Gap 1.5% a slight increase from 2017, against the average for Scottish Councils of 3.9% (2017/18)
- The inclusion of employee employment statistics for Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation for the first time.
- An increase in the number of Keepsafe sites across North Ayrshire from 1 in 2017 to 9 in 2018.
- Engagement with the British Sign Language (BSL) community in the development and implementation of the BSL plan
- A wide range of ongoing work to support the LGBT+ community
- Achievement of Level 2 of the Disability Confident Scheme

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the reports attached at [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#).

4. Implications

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| Financial: | None |
| Human Resources: | This report details employee information in relation to protected characteristics |
| Legal: | None, however failure of the Council to ensure it is implementing its duties under the Equality Act could lead to legal challenges |
| Equality: Children and Young People: | The effective reporting on and scrutiny of the issues within this report help the council to fulfil its equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. |
| Environmental & Sustainability: | None |
| Key Priorities: | Mainstreaming Equalities throughout Services will help to ensure the Council has robust policies, plans and procedures in place that support all the key priorities |
| Community Benefits: | None |

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Corporate Equality Group have been consulted on the reports attached at Appendix 1 and 2.

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For further information please contact **Andrew Hale** on **01294 324148**

Background Papers

N/A