

**EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report to:** The Cabinet  
6 July 2021

**Wards:** All

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**Annual Progress towards meeting the Equality Duty and the  
Corporate Equality Objectives 2020-2021**

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Report of the Director of Adults, Health and Customer Services

**A. Executive Summary**

The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) places a number of requirements on the Council, including publishing information to show compliance with the ‘equality duty’ and to update on progress towards achieving the Council’s Corporate Equality Objectives. Both of these requirements should be carried out on an annual basis and therefore, this report provides an update on the work that has been undertaken during 2020-2021. The report also includes a summary of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how services, where possible have adapted to maintain operation.

**B. Corporate Priorities**

Helping Children and Young People Achieve  
Protecting the Vulnerable

**C. Portfolio**

Deputy Leader  
Adults and Health  
Children and Young People’s, Education, Health and Wellbeing  
Economic Growth and Tourism  
Environment and Climate Change  
Public Health and Tackling Inequalities  
Planning, Infrastructure and Housing  
Cultural and Leisure Assets  
Community Involvement and Voluntary Sector

**D. Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that The Cabinet notes the progress made.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 As set out within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), all public sector bodies are subject to the three aims of the ‘general’ equality duty when exercising their functions, and must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; the Act further explains that this involves:
  - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
  - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

1.2 Further to the general duties of the PSED, as above, public authorities are subject to ‘specific duties’, one of which, is to publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty and how the three aims of the general equality duty have been considered as part of the decision-making process. This may include information relating to employees who share a protected characteristic and information relating to people who are affected by the public body’s policies and practices who share a protected characteristic. The other ‘specific’ duty is to develop and publish measurable equality objectives that are needed to further the aims of the ‘general’ equality duty and to publish an update on progress towards these on an annual basis.

1.3 The following equality objectives were adopted by the Council for the period 2020-2024:

- Council services are as accessible as possible and appropriate to user’ needs for people with a protected characteristic.
- Protected characteristic groups can participate in all relevant consultations and engagement activities, helping ensure their ability to influence the decision making process.
- Improve the health and well-being of people in the community with a protected characteristic.

1.4 The annual report for 2019-20 was incorporated within the [Corporate Equality Plan 2020-2024](#) which reported on the conclusion of the previous Equality objectives (2016-20) and set the objectives for next four years.

## 2. Considerations including Options

### 2.1 Compliance with the Equality Duty

2.1.1 The Council’s **Equality Analysis** process has been redesigned to identify both negative and positive impacts on protected characteristic groups due to a proposed change to policy, practice or service. It also considers the three general aims of the equality duty within our decision making process. A number of equality screening forms – Stage 1 have been completed over the year but none have been progressed to Stage 2. All equality analyses – Stage 2 are published on the council’s website and previous examples can be found there: <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/council/plans-and-policies/other-plans-and-policies-information/equalities-and-diversity/>.

2.1.2 An ‘**Equalities Workforce Information Report**’ is produced annually, which includes various employment information regarding council employees, relating to all of the

protected characteristics. The most recent report, for 2018-2019, has been published on the council website <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/council/plans-and-policies/other-plans-and-policies-information/equalities-and-diversity/>.

- 2.1.3 Under the Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, employers with 250 or more employees are required to publish statutory **gender pay gap** calculations on an annual basis with effect from April 2018. The gender pay gap for East Riding of Yorkshire Council employees for 2019-2020 has therefore, been calculated, reported to government and published on the council website <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/council/governance-and-spending/gender-pay-gap/>. The council's pay gap continues to decrease and now stands at 6.49% (March 2020). This continues to reflect positive progress especially when viewed in the context of the current national average pay gap of 15.5% (March 2020). Work continues to close the gap further.
- 2.1.4 Over the last financial year, services have continued to be encouraged to include relevant **Equality Monitoring** questions in any public consultations and surveys to help inform service provision. This enables services to consider the number of people with different characteristics who access and use their services in different ways and has been a key equality objective for the year (see 2.3.2).
- 2.1.5 The guidance notes on Equality Data Collection and Monitoring have been updated to incorporate the latest guidance on data collection and storage. An additional ethnicity category has been added to the standard form for those who identify as Roma in line with the Census 2021.
- 2.1.6 The Business Intelligence team provides data and other demographic mapping which enables services to develop a greater understanding of the needs of specific groups. The Census 2021 data, when published, will provide an important update to the demographic profile of the region and help inform service delivery and strategic direction.
- 2.1.7 Equality data has also been used, for instance, to monitor performance, participation, attainment and outcomes across services and projects such as the Advanced Coast Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and Adult Learning programmes. Equality data is collected as part of standard data sets for commissioned services.
- 2.1.8 Adult Social Care NHS data and School Census DfE returns are maintained by the Adult and Children's performance teams respectively. A new case management system, *Azeus*, is being implemented, from May 2021 which will enable more detailed information to be recorded.
- 2.1.9 Information is collected on the number of penalty charge notices issued to those displaying a blue badge, including the reason for issue such as out of date, defaced or being used by a non-disabled driver. This information supports the ability to update disability groups and reduce future issues.

## 2.2 COVID-19 and the pandemic response

- 2.2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone but it is widely recognised that some protected characteristic groups have been disproportionately impacted by the virus and the measures taken to control it. A full equality analysis has been carried out and regularly reviewed in order to monitor this impact, to inform the response of the Vulnerable Recovery Task group and to highlight mitigations that have been put in place.

- 2.2.2 Public Health has been at the forefront of pandemic response and control. Commissioned services and contingency plans have mitigated impacts and service delivery changes were made to ensure that commissioned services have remained as accessible as possible. Where digital options were not possible, then face to face services have been maintained.
- 2.2.3 Through the Community Response Hubs and a dedicated help line, vulnerable families have been supported through the provision of food, medication and support, including home visits as necessary. This has been undertaken in partnership with community organisations and other external partners to ensure that vulnerable residents received the help they required.
- 2.2.4 The corporate communications team has made use of digital channels with video production and imagery now standard to communicate messages. For those who are not digitally enabled, corporate communications have continued to print and deliver to every home - *Your East Riding* and other important communications such as information around *The 3 Steps To Safety* campaign: 'Prevent'; 'Notice'; 'Act', for example. Alternative 'easy read' documents regarding COVID-19 have been made available on the website. The team also created a Vaccine Hesitancy Survey to help understand why people may choose not to take up the vaccine and to locate any barriers to communication within certain groups, this included age, occupation, gender and ethnicity.
- 2.2.5 Where customer facing sites have been closed due to lockdown measures, staff have continued to keep lines of communication open to customers through the use of social media, telephone and website. More vulnerable customers, such as those on the leisure centre health improvement programmes, have been contacted on a regular basis by telephone or through digital content (Active Together), to help them feel connected and engaged. Libraries have provided a click and collect service and there has been a significant increase in the e-resources offer.
- 2.2.6 Adult Social Care has continued to deliver its statutory duties. A 'Covid Response' centre was initiated to work alongside the sector to manage risk, infection control and maintain service delivery across adult social care. This has allowed the customer support service to continue to provide a 7 day service to the most vulnerable customers being discharged from hospital.
- 2.2.7 Children, Families and Schools have sought to provide a high level of contact and support (including access to technology, free school meals and holiday activities) for vulnerable children including those with special educational needs.
- 2.2.8 Adult Services have adjusted how assessments and reviews are carried out and through robust risk management, have visited those adults who lack capacity or are in need of an urgent assessment visit. All other assessments have been undertaken over the telephone and services provided to those vulnerable adults who meet the eligibility criteria for care and support.
- 2.2.9 Day Services have been closed but all services have maintained contact via social media, telephone calls and home visits and 1:1 work in community settings. Activity packs have also been sent out on a fortnightly basis. The Residential Service has carried out risk assessments on front line staff who were identified as more vulnerable and staff were given non-contact roles or required to isolate from the service as appropriate. Increased and enhanced cleaning hours has allowed the homes to remain 'Covid free'.

Families have maintained contact when legally allowed and technology and other forms of communication have been maintained.

- 2.2.10 Adult Learning Centres have created virtual learning opportunities and have provided 1:1 support calls with learners who required additional guidance and support. The Education, Employment and Skills Team also developed a '*Preparing to Learn Virtually*' session which was aimed at supporting new learners and increasing their confidence and skills with new technologies.
- 2.2.11 There has, sadly, been an increased demand for burial plots at the cemeteries and staff have been redeployed and given training to facilitate this demand. Services at the cemeteries have continued, though with restricted capacity during lockdown, to allow the bereaved to mourn their loved ones.
- 2.2.12 Refuse, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services have remained in place throughout the pandemic and have continued to deliver a service to residents. Household Waste Recycling Sites have also remained open with measures in place to allow residents to safely use the facilities whilst keeping the site staff safe. Caddy Liners have been made available in a wider range of locations and assisted pull outs on waste collection services have been extended to residents who were shielding.
- 2.2.13 Additional vehicles, drivers and passenger assistants were provided to allow for social distancing through reduced capacity. This has enabled children of key workers and SEND children who required transportation to access educational facilities as safely as possible.
- 2.2.14 Services across the Council, have adapted to government regulations in order to maintain service levels. Examples include: *Revenue and Benefits* who have continued to work hard to ensure that services are accessible, maintaining telephone support and reducing the levels of information required; *Occupational Health* who have continued to offer face to face appointments for those unable to use video/telephone calls due to their disability and *Advantage Coast CLLD projects* have moved to online provision but have maintained face to face meetings for those who are digitally excluded.
- 2.2.15 Revenue and Benefits have successfully distributed central government grants to individuals and business who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. These included: £135 million in business grant payments (for which the Council was named in top 5 authorities for making the first grant payments in March 2020); £825,000 to vulnerable children and adults for food and fuel payments to alleviate poverty; £300,000 in emergency assistance payments to individuals who have been affected by the pandemic for food and other essential items and £311,000 in self-isolation payments to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- 2.2.16 Where possible, staff have moved to home working and the digital support has been enhanced including the roll out of MS Teams. This has enabled staff to continue to operate effectively and ensure that there has been minimum disruption to services and council operations. Safe systems of work have been maintained where staff have been required to attend the workplace. All staff have been issued with PPE when they are required to visit people in their own homes or who are based in residential care.
- 2.2.17 Legislation was passed that allowed formal Committee meetings to be held remotely. These have been broadcast on YouTube which has enabled meetings to be more accessible for all groups.

2.2.18 Overall, the Council has ensured that there were sufficient resources available throughout the year, in order that it could continue to operate and respond effectively to the financial and practical challenges of the pandemic.

### 2.3 Progress towards the Equality Objectives

2.3.1 Despite the restrictions imposed by the necessary pandemic control measures, an incredible amount of positive work has taken place during 2020-21, in order to progress the delivery of the corporate equality objectives. These activities further support the three general aims of the equality duty. The information below has been gathered from a range of services and the key actions are set out below in more detail:

2.3.2 **Council services are as accessible as possible and appropriate to user needs for people with a protected characteristic:** The Council continues to maintain a Translation and Interpretation service contract which is available to all service providers should a customer require communication in an alternative language. This includes BSL, audio and braille provision. During the pandemic, this service was able to provide video and telephone interpretation as an alternative to face to face for the majority of bookings.

2.3.3 Schools that have signed up to the corporate service equalities SLA have continued to be supported in carrying out accessibility audits leading to the creation of their accessibility plan in compliance with PSED requirements.

2.3.4 Children, Families and Schools work in partnership with health colleagues and the Specialist Teaching Service to ensure that communication with service users who may have a sensory impairment, is accessible.

2.3.5 The Library service has extended their home delivery service and the range of audio and e-books, to support people with disabilities.

2.3.6 Bridlington Spa programmes include more relaxed, quieter performances for customers who are on the autism spectrum or who have sensory impairments.

2.3.7 Residential settings have been further developed with improvements including: the creation of an indoor visiting rooms to facilitate family visits; internal decoration and furnishings; a glass screens fitted in reception area along with a microphone/speakerphone; new rise and fall baths fitted in the main bathroom; SMART Televisions installed in lounges and garden improvements and the introduction of a Bar area to improve outdoor social interaction and activities.

2.3.8 Town View, located in Beverley is a registered short break service provider for people with a learning disability which includes emergency and crisis respite. A new accessible bath has been fitted in the communal bathroom and some staff are trained in Makaton or sign language and all information is provided in an easy to read format. The majority of admissions over the past year have been new to the service following promotion to the wider learning disability community.

2.3.9 All residents aged 19+ are able to access adult learning services. Specific programmes have been created for those for whom English is not their first language in order to support the development of their English reading, writing and communication skills and for them to be able to take an active part in their local community. Additional support is in place to support learners who are anxious about technology, lack confidence and/or lack digital skills. Partnerships with the community and voluntary sectors have been establish in order to promote the service to new learners.

- 2.3.10 The Syrian Resettlement Programme has continued to support Syrian Refugees who have been settled in the East Riding with housing, advice, education and employment skills training. Staff working on the programme have learned to converse in basic Arabic in order to support and encourage the families in making the East Riding their new home. The Translation and Interpretation service is available to all services and extended to medical practices, dentists and opticians when supporting refugees on the programme.
- 2.3.11 All applicants to the Advantage Coast CLLD programme are asked how they promote and monitor the impact of the project in terms of equality and diversity, to ensure that support is accessible to all. This is then scored as part of the project appraisal.
- 2.3.12 An Adoption and Fostering campaign has been developed to encourage members of the LGBTQ+ community to consider becoming foster carers.
- 2.3.13 Digital access has increased to enable customers to have access to the information they need and make online transactions. However, traditional methods of communication are maintained for those who do not have access or who are not comfortable using the digital process.
- 2.3.14 The latest good practice and legislation is applied to design and construction. All new constructions aim to improve the experience for people with disabilities in terms of, for example, accessibility, hearing loops and improved signage. Staff maintain their continuing professional development and knowledge of equality and disability considerations relating to design. The aim is for staff to become trained as access auditors in order to inform and support services across the council and external partners.
- 2.3.15 The Council is a key stakeholder in the Women into Manufacturing and Engineering programme. This Humber based and industry led programme aims to drive positive change in terms of inspiring girls to consider careers in engineering (women currently make up less than 10% of the UK engineering workforce).
- 2.3.16 Additional funding has been secured to install increased numbers of dropped access crossing points across the area. These improve mobility for wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs and prams etc.
- 2.3.17 Consideration of the licensing of 'A boards' on the highway is being undertaken. This would help regulate the positioning and number of advertising boards reducing the potential for hazards and barriers for people with visual impairments or mobility issues.
- 2.3.18 Human Resources have adapted interview assessments to suit a virtual interview setting. Reasonable adjustments have been made as required, including the use of the subtitle and chat functions within Microsoft Teams.
- 2.3.19 **Protected characteristic groups can participate in all relevant consultations and engagement activities, helping ensure their ability to influence the decision making process:** Consultations are available in online and non-digital format and alternative languages are available on request to ensure that all groups have an opportunity to engage. Marketing campaigns have a greater digital/social media presence to broaden the reach of messaging.
- 2.3.20 A sensory impairment needs assessment is currently in development and local and national groups have been consulted in order to inform the development of a community

survey. The survey will trial the accessibility features in *SmartSurvey* to ensure that online questionnaires are compatible with assistive technologies.

- 2.3.21 Consultation and engagement with young people has been facilitated in partnership with ERVAS. This will help inform the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2024.
- 2.3.22 Consultation took place in 2019 with local disability groups regarding the Bridlington Town Centre Seafront Scheme. As a result, changes were made to the design of lighting and improved ramp access.
- 2.3.23 Public consultations are carried out on major construction projects and equality impact assessments are included as part of ISO quality management systems.
- 2.3.24 Consultation has taken place to ensure that existing EU staff are fully informed about the changes in employment guidance post-Brexit in order that they can apply for settled status.
- 2.3.25 An action plan working group has been established in partnership with other public sector stakeholders and representatives from the local community in order to report on and implement the actions identified within the LGBTQ+ needs assessment carried out in 2019.
- 2.3.26 Residential settings hold weekly resident meetings to allow all service users to discuss any changes or improvements they feel are needed. Day Service staff are trained to pay attention to body language and non-verbal communication in order to support service users who are unable to articulate their thoughts and feelings.
- 2.3.27 **Improve the health and well-being of people in the community with a protected characteristic:** The Council has embedded a 'Health in all Policies' approach across planning and strategy development in order to address health inequalities and support the needs of the most vulnerable. The Council also works with strategic partners to ensure that all health and wellbeing plans, strategies and implementations have the needs of those with protected characteristics embedded within them.
- 2.3.28 A new emotional and mental health wellbeing programme for looked after children and care leavers has been introduced. This includes the appointment of a specialist nurse whose role is to ensure that vulnerable or excluded young people are able to access the appropriate health care and support.
- 2.3.29 Digital content has been developed through the *Active Together programme* (for older customers and care homes) and free workouts have been offered to regular customers of the leisure centres through their YouTube channel. Over 120 people have engaged digitally through the *Escape Pain programme*.
- 2.3.30 Community based health and wellbeing programmes are promoted such as *Active Coast*, *Active Towns* and *Active Withernsea*.
- 2.3.31 The EU-funded Bicycles and Intelligent Transport Systems (BITS) project is incorporating adapted bicycles into a bike lending scheme that is being delivered for the benefit of residents in Withernsea and Holderness.
- 2.3.32 The completion of Hornsea Community Hub/Leisure Centre has made a positive difference to the accessibility of services and health and wellbeing of local residents. The building has many improved design features including a more accessible pool area, easier to use changing facilities and more specialised facilities.

- 2.3.33 The '*Your Life, Your Way*' change programme in Adult Social Care services has been successfully promoted with a focus on preventing, reducing or delaying the development of care needs and maximising people's independence.
- 2.3.34 A range of courses have been provided either as virtual learning or eLearning through Adult Learning programmes aimed at improving health and wellbeing and understanding of neurodiversity.
- 2.3.35 The Advance Coast CLLD programme aims to reduce social isolation and increase the confidence for individuals to seek and find successful employment opportunities.
- 2.3.36 The Council is a partner in the *Two Churches Project* which includes a celebration of the Minster's role in providing sanctuary both historically and in modern times reflecting the organisations supporting refugees and the homeless.
- 2.3.37 The Technical Assistance Programme team have supported a number of bids on behalf of the Council for the European Social Fund which seek to support disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the region. These bids will:
- improve the management of mental health in the work place and build confidence and capacity to return to employment
  - support the over 50s to retrain and develop new skills and support women in the workforce through the creation of positive and more flexible working cultures and higher career aspirations.
- 2.3.38 A strategic review of Domestic Abuse services has examined demand from protected characteristic groups and has identified how services can be developed to meet those needs.

## **2.4 Other equality related work and projects which have taken place across the East Riding and have helped to support the three general aims of the equality duty include:**

- 2.4.1 Mandatory equality and diversity eLearning is provided for all staff and completion rates are regularly monitored. An eLearning package has also been produced for school staff who are signed up to the SLA. Individual service areas have also participated in additional awareness training such as understanding hearing loss, dementia awareness, race relations, autism awareness, transgender and non-binary awareness.
- 2.4.2 Discussions have taken place with public sector partners to re-establish the East Riding Equalities Network (EREN). General principles and 'Terms of Reference' are currently being considered and it is anticipated that the network will be formally launched in the coming months.

## **2.5 Promotion and celebration of Equality and Diversity**

- 2.5.1 An Equality Calendar has been produced and regular social media output has been published in order to commemorate and celebrate relevant equality and diversity events e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and Transgender Day of Visibility.
- 2.5.2 The Libraries, through the use of social media and internally, operate a year round calendar of events.

- 2.5.3 Bridlington Spa has used coloured lighting to support events such as Pride and International Women's Day.
- 2.5.4 Advantage Coast CLLD projects have promoted World Mental Health Day to support their participants.
- 2.5.5 The '*TeamTalk*' newsletter produced by the Education, Employment and Skills team regularly encourages the celebration of diversity and positive case studies are shared as good practice.
- 2.5.6 Residential services have maintained a regular programme of celebration of feast days as well as themed evenings.
- 2.5.7 The school improvement team have supported schools in the development of a new and inclusive sex and relationships curriculum.

## **2.6 Workforce Equality**

- 2.6.1 A new People Strategy has been developed to enable a more diverse and inclusive working environment and workforce. There is a specific action plan which identifies workforce equality and diversity actions and this includes the use of more diverse and positive images in recruitment.
- 2.6.2 A new Agile Transformation Lead has been appointed and equality and diversity will be at the forefront of the agile project. Agile working will provide the opportunity to offer more flexibility which will be of particular benefit to those with caring responsibilities or who have disabilities.
- 2.6.3 Workplace adjustments have been made for staff with neuro-diversities (such as dyslexia) and for those with sensory impairments (sight or hearing loss) or other disabilities and who require assistive technology and other home office equipment.
- 2.6.4 The Council has developed a wellbeing offer for staff, with practical ideas and techniques such as mindfulness training to help maintain and improve their mental wellbeing.
- 2.6.5 Recruitment and selection training and guidance for recruiting managers has been updated to reflect the advice to be considerate of bias when interviewing virtually. Unconscious bias training is included within the recruitment and selection training.
- 2.6.6 Within residential settings, a Staff Wellbeing Room has been created to allow private space during periods of stress and anxiety. It is also used as a prayer room.

## **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 Despite the obvious challenges presented by COVID-19 during 2020-21, there has been significant progress towards the corporate equality objectives 2020-24 and in support of the general aims of the Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance opportunity and foster good relations. The required equality related information to comply with the equality duty has been published on the Council's website, including information such as gender pay gap, workforce information and completed equality analyses.
- 3.2 In partnership with other public sector partners, through the re-established East Riding Equalities Network (EREN), each locally operating public sector organisation will

share its corporate equality objectives and identify opportunities for collaboration on strategic priorities. During 2021-22 key equality actions will be identified and progressed alongside the continued Council activities and equality related work.

- 3.3 The report welcomes the appointment of Cllr Birch as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and the opportunity that this appointment presents to make further progress towards the Equality Objectives during 2021-22.

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**Background Papers** Corporate Equality Plan 2020-2024