

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2018

EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING AND OUTCOMES UPDATE REPORT

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Acknowledge the Aberdeenshire Council Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes progress statement at Appendix 1.**

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee on Aberdeenshire Council's progress against the Equality Outcomes set in the Mainstreaming and Equalities Report 2017-2021.
- 2.2 In order to meet its legislative obligations, the Council, the Education Authority and the three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards must report on the following by 30 April 2019:-
 - progress in making equalities integral to its activities
 - progress in respect of the Equality Outcomes 2017 – 2021
- 2.3 For 2018/19, Services are encouraged to mainstream equalities, and provide quarterly performance updates through respective Equality Champions.
- 2.4 In addition, the monitoring report provides the opportunity for Elected Members to maintain scrutiny of significant activities in order to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire.
- 2.5 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section E.1.1.b of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the Committee that has full powers to decide on all policy issues and resource matters relating to Education functions which have not been reserved to the Full Council or specifically delegated to any other Committee or the Council.

4 Implications & Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the report is to inform committee on performance and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications.
- 4.3 No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level.
- 4.4 No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level.
- 4.5 There are no Town First implications arising directly from this report.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Andrew Martin, Strategic Policy Leader (Community Engagement and Equalities)
Date 06 February 2018

Appendix 1

Equalities Outcomes updates

Equality Outcome 1. Safer and better decision making will be achieved as a result of being better informed of Equality & Diversity matters

The policy team at Business Services are developing a screening assessment tool to help officers consider equality issues earlier, and throughout their decision making activity. The policy team is also reviewing Council papers from 2017 to evaluate the quality of the assessments.

Equalities Champions continue to perform a key role in promoting equality issues, also helping officers approach equalities issues in a confident and open way. Services are submitting the Budget Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for each budget page. As part of the revenue budget for 2018/19, EqIAs have been undertaken where a change occurs to assess any impact, positive or negative, on protected characteristic groups.

The three Licensing Boards in Aberdeenshire are implementing their own Equality Policy.

A Corporate policy for engagement is under development and currently being consulted on. The Policy Team has a dedicated Engagement Officer whose role is to assist services in consulting with communities when developing policy and changes.

Equality Outcome 2. To promote a better understanding of the needs of people of different race and develop strategies which support them.

Aberdeenshire Council is collaborating with Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland and local housing associations as part of the Integrate Grampian Group. Data and evidence about racial equality is being gathered and compiled into a single review titled "How Fair is Aberdeenshire". The review is an effective benchmark for racial equalities across the area and a programme for publicising and disseminating the review is underway.

Equality Outcome 3. Develop a better understanding of the needs of people with a disability and develop and promote strategies which ensure access to council services and which support them in education and employment

Access Panels are consulted on planning applications with responses submitted directly to site developers. Aberdeenshire has four Disability Access Panels who meet monthly and cover the whole Aberdeenshire area. The panels are voluntary organisations, separate from the Council, whose members have an interest in promoting access to facilities and services. The panels are community groups who have a good relationship with the Planning Service. Most members have a personal experience of disability and are trained in access issues. Panels comment on plans submitted for 'Public Access' developments (not private dwellings but any development accessed as a customer, service user or employee etc.) The panel feedback may be about Building Standards but may also reflect issues beyond the remit of the Planning Service, which may still cause access issues for the disabled community.

Equality Outcome 4. Develop a better understanding of the needs of LGBT people as employees and customers, develop and cascade strategies which minimise bullying and harassment in schools and the community. Achieve measurably reduced levels of prejudice and discrimination against the LGBT community.

Aberdeenshire Council has participated in a recent Stonewall survey of the organisation. Education have existing policies which cover LGBT related bullying. Reminders of the guidance are circulated periodically and recorded incidents are reviewed annually.

Education are implementing a revised LGBT awareness-raising programme for schools to deliver as part of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum. This is to be included in the 2018-1 business plan.

Equality Outcome 5. Aberdeenshire Council's recruitment is implemented with fairness and transparency and fully supports people with Protected Characteristics.

A review of recruitment and selection by Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) is due for completion and updated online (ALDO) and face to face training for recruitment and selection will be developed and rolled out in early 2018. The updated training will reflect any areas for improvement identified in relation to protected characteristics.

HR & OD are developing a 'Disability Confident' scheme, aimed at recruiting managers and senior leaders and continue to implement a 'Developing the Young Workforce' scheme. This has a particular focus on gender imbalance and pay gap.

Equality Outcome 6. There will be a more inclusive culture whereby all employees understand and respect difference.

Human Resources are developing a plan to roll out targeted training for leaders. The training will demonstrate how to promote key equalities messages, raise awareness of issues experienced in the workplace and improve understanding of the need to challenge negative behaviour.

Equalities Champions continue to perform a key role in promoting equality issues, also helping officers approach equalities issues in a confident and open way.

The Policy Team have been meeting with the Champions on a 1-2-1 basis and discussing how progress is being made on mainstreaming equalities. This is with the view of establishing a two-way dialogue to facilitate the services in communicating their progress towards the equality outcomes.