



Report subject	Progress in delivery equalities across BCP 2021
Meeting date	28 July 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Equality and Diversity Annual report provides an update on how the council is progressing with embedding equality and diversity in the way it plans, develops, and delivers services and in discharging its public sector equality duty.</p> <p>The report sets out the Equality Footprint which reinforces the commitments to equality expressed in the council's corporate strategy and the vision of the Big Plan.</p> <p>The report also identifies some of the actions the council needs to take to realise the ambitions of the Equality Footprint and to achieve the excellence level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) note progress with Equality & Diversity for 2020/21 (b) support the introduction of the Independent Observer role in recruitment process and support the necessary changes to HR recruitment policy (c) support the adoption of the equality footprint (d) note the steps the council must take to realise its equality ambitions and to achieve the excellence level of the EFLG
Reason for recommendations	<p>The council has a duty to consider how their policies, practice, and decision- making processes affect people who are protected by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Failure to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty could have significant legal and financial implications for the council and individuals.</p> <p>This report should give Cabinet assurance that the council is taking positive steps to discharge this duty and that its future ambitions for equality will continue to help the council ensure this.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council Bobbie Dove – Cabinet Lead Member for Equalities
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant – Chief Executive
Report Authors	Sam Johnson – Policy Lead for Equality & Diversity Councillor Bobbie Dove – Cabinet Lead Member for Equalities
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. BCP Council plays an important role as an employer, service provider and community leader. It is committed to demonstrating respect for difference, to create an environment in which people can live free from prejudice and discrimination whether they live work or visit BCP Council area.
2. As well as discharging the public sector equality duty, the council aspires to exceed its duties on the journey to achieving, and maintaining, excellence accreditation of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
3. The Equality and Diversity annual report appended to this paper sets some of what the council has achieved so far, the key events it has responded to and its future ambitions for ensuring equality and diversity in the way that designs, develops and delivers its services.
4. The council's commitments to equality are expressed throughout the priorities and objectives of the Corporate Strategy. To help emphasise these commitments the intention is to launch an Equalities footprint which is defined as:

The activities undertaken by officers in accordance with their role that contribute to the delivery of BCP Councils equalities agenda and the duties of the council at individual, team, and service levels.

5. The adoption of the equalities footprint will necessitate some key changes to current policy and practice which are explained in more detail in the report and will be added to the current Equality & Diversity Action plan, once agreed.

Summary of financial implications

6. There will be some financial implications for introducing independent observers, stakeholders, and service users to the recruitment process as they will be entitled to reimbursement of their expenses. The full extent of this will be dependent on the number of senior posts recruited to.
7. Several of the other actions set out under the Equality Footprint are aligned other planned work so are not expected to incur additional expenditure.

Summary of legal implications

8. The proposal will support the council to discharge its public sector equality duty.

Summary of human resources implications

9. Not aware of any human resource implications as a number of the actions out under the Equality Footprint are aligned with other planned work.

Summary of sustainability impact

10. No known sustainability impacts.

Summary of public health implications

11. The Equality Footprint sets out to support Public Health in working with hard to reach community groups. There are no known negative public health implications.

Summary of equality implications

12. The Equality Footprint will raise awareness of the council officers' responsibilities under the public sector equality duty.
13. It will have a positive impact as it will allow the opportunity for the council to demonstrate how the public sector equality duty is implemented in day to day business practice.
14. The introduction of independent observers will increase trust and confidence in BCP Council as an equitable employer and enable it to become more representative of the communities it serves. A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken if this initiative is supported.

Summary of risk assessment

15. If the council does not discharge its public sector equality duty, there is a risk of challenge to its decisions.

Background papers

Corporate Strategy & Delivery Plans

[Equality & Diversity Policy and Governance Framework](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress in delivery equalities across BCP 2021

Appendix 2: Independent Observers Equality Impact Assessment: Conversation Screening Tool