

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Equality and Diversity

Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Bruce Pickard

Report from Service
Area:

Corporate Strategy

Responsible Officer:

Jacqueline Laughton
Head of Corporate Strategy and
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Wards affected:

All wards

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

North Tyneside Council's Equality and Diversity Policy ("the Policy") sets out its commitment to achieving the aims of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and how it will seek to demonstrate due regard to these aims in the way the Authority exercises its functions.

In accordance with good practice, the Policy is reviewed every two years. On this occasion the opportunity was also taken to review the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives – these highlight the priority issues the Authority needs to address to better achieve the aims of the Act. Consultation on the Policy and the review of the Corporate Equality Objectives was undertaken between November 2020 and January 2021.

This report updates Cabinet on the findings of the consultation exercise and the review of the Corporate Equality Objectives and proposed actions.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) agree the Equality and Diversity Policy for the Authority; and
- (2) agree the Corporate Equality Objectives for the Authority for the period April 2021 to March 2022.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 18 December 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

North Tyneside Council's commitment to equality and diversity, as outlined in the updated Equality and Diversity Policy, underpins all of the priorities contained in the Our North Tyneside Plan 2020-24.

The commitments made in the Policy are also reflected in the Authority's customer promise (Appendix 2) and values (Appendix 3).

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Context

The Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out its commitment to achieving the main aim of the Equality Act 2010 which is to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct and to demonstrate how the Authority, when carrying out its functions, will have due regard to the public sector equality duty and the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic under the Act and those who do not have such a characteristic; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

A protected characteristic under the Act is any of the following: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy was originally agreed in 2017 and in line with good practice is reviewed every two years in consultation with internal and external groups and individuals. As a review of the Policy was due, the opportunity was also taken to review the Corporate Equality Objectives. These objectives enable the Authority to identify and publish the priority issues (in terms of policy making, service delivery and employment) it needs to address in order to better achieve the aims of the Act.

This report sets out the findings from the equality policy consultation and the review of the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

1.5.2 Equality and Diversity Policy consultation findings

Consultation on the Policy ran from 25 November 2020 until 17 January 2021.

The following external groups were asked to participate: AgeUK, Youth Council, Church of England, Catholic Church, North East Sikh Service, Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force (which includes Black, Muslim and Jewish community representatives, Show Racism the Red Card, Tyne Coast College, North Tyneside Business Forum, Department for Work and Pensions, North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) and Nexus), North Tyneside Disability Forum, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People, Learning Disability North East, North Tyneside Women's Voices, Barnardos, Peary House, Action on Hearing Loss, North Tyneside Carers Centre, Northern Pride, North Tyneside Residents Panel and local people.

Internally views were sought from: Deputy Mayor, Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Equality Group, Trades Unions and employees.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted internally through the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork; and externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media.

124 responses were received. These came from members of the Corporate Equality Group, Senior Leadership Team, Youth Council, the Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force, Age UK, North Shields and Whitley Bay Methodist Circuit, North Tyneside Residents Panel, and employees and residents.

The feedback received was positive and informed the proposed amendments made to the Policy (highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1) or to the new actions underpinning the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives. Many respondents stated their approval of the Policy and the importance of ensuring it is put into practice. The respondents recognised the need to demonstrate due regard to all protected characteristics and a desire to continue developing a better community for all.

1.5.3 Corporate Equality Objectives

In accordance with the requirements of the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, the Authority must:

‘prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.... at least every four years’.

The Authority's current Corporate Equality Objectives were agreed by Cabinet in January 2019, implemented from April 2019 and published in the 2019 Annual Equality and Diversity Review. As the Equality Objectives are reviewed every two years, it was timely to undertake that review alongside the review of the Policy.

The Authority's current Equality Objectives and underpinning actions are outlined below. In light of the progress achieved, a refreshed set of actions for 2021/22 are proposed alongside one new additional Equality Objective.

Objective 1: Improve North Tyneside Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Review, update and promote EIA guidance and documentation.
- b. Appoint new EIA 'champions' who will be trained and supported to help team members complete EIAs.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for the re-introduction of a fit for purpose electronic system for EIAs.

Progress to date:

- a. A new EIA form and guidance were developed, published on the intranet and are in use.
- b. It was agreed that Corporate Equality Group members should act as EIA Champions, however the development and roll out of this training has been delayed until Spring 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- c. Options for development and introduction of a new electronic system for the storage and monitoring of EIAs is progressing.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Deliver EIA training for trainers to Corporate Equality Group Members for roll out within all service areas.
- b. Create and share single list of live EIAs.
- c. Complete an audit of EIA and equality data collection processes across all service areas.
- d. Re-introduce a fit for purpose electronic system for EIAs.

Objective 2: Be a good employer and promote an inclusive workforce that feels valued

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Undertake and implement findings from the Staff and Employee Health and Wellbeing surveys.
- b. Understand the specific equality and diversity issues arising from both surveys and make recommendations for action.
- c. Develop and promote an annual equalities events calendar, encouraging employees to contribute to the development of the activities it delivers.
- d. Ensuring that the Authority's mental health first aid approach provides increased awareness of the issues associated with specific protected characteristics.

Progress to date:

- a. The findings from both surveys have been shared and action taken. This has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic through the Employee Pulse Surveys of July and November 2020.
- b. Analysis of the Staff and Employee Health and Wellbeing surveys was completed. This led to further engagement with employees with disabilities led by the Chief Executive, which informed the Authority's Employee Covid Risk Assessment process and work to develop a Workplace Support Profile and Disability Policy.

During 2020 focused engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees began and will continue in the early part of 2021.

- c. Equality and diversity calendars were agreed for 2019 and 2020 and awareness raising activities promoted and delivered across both years. The 2021 Equality and Diversity calendar has been developed.
- d. Awareness raising about the impact of mental health conditions on people with protected characteristics was undertaken with the Authority's Mental Health First Aiders.
- e. The Authority has been awarded Disability Confident status from 2021-2024 – this reflects the actions taken by the Authority to recruit, retain and develop employees with disabilities.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Continue to analyse the findings from the Employee Pulse Surveys by equality characteristic and act on the findings.
- b. Implement the Workplace Support Profile and introduce a Disability Policy to sit alongside the Authority's Attendance/Wellbeing Policy.
- c. Review the Authority's Attendance Management Procedure to ensure a wider focus on health and wellbeing.
- d. Deliver the Authority's commitment to make its workforce more representative of the borough's population through its Workforce Development Plan.
- e. Implement an embedding equality programme to make equality and diversity "everyone's business", this will include work to establish staff networks.
- f. Develop and implement an action plan based on findings from engagement with BAME employees.
- g. Promote and deliver the 2021 Equality and Diversity Calendar events and activities.

Objective 3: Ensure staff and elected members are kept informed about the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Continue to develop and deliver a programme of equality training.
- b. Develop a handbook to help staff consider and respond to the needs of customers and colleagues with specific protected characteristics.
- c. Ensure that our equality duties are considered as part of the review of the North Tyneside Council Constitution.

Progress to date:

- a. Participation in the Authority's equality training programme is growing with 79% of managers being up to date with their equality training. The provision of on-line training for managers, the roll out of devices to enable more staff to participate in on-line training and the on-going development of new learning methods have all contributed.
- b. The staff equality handbook has been published.
- c. The review of the Authority's Constitution is paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Add further courses and learning options to the existing equality training programme for both staff and elected members to provide information and guidance on specific equality groups and issues.

Objective 4: Improve the collection and use of both internal and external equality data

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Provide guidance on the appropriate and consistent collection of equality data.
- b. Improve collection of staff equality data on our Business Management System (BMS) to increase by 50% the number of staff who complete BMS data by March 2020.
- c. Use staff equality data to inform the development of initiatives to support our commitment to make our workforce more representative of the borough's population.
- d. Use equality data to ensure service delivery and community engagement is balanced and proportionate.

Progress to date:

- a. Standard equality/demographic questions and guidance were developed and published.
- b. The number of employees providing equality data has increased but the data provided varies by characteristic. All employees with access to BMS are now asked on an annual basis to update their personal details. Managers of those employees without access are also asked to undertake the check with their employees. Further progress will be possible following installation of a new business management system.
- c. Human Resources routinely use equality data to inform its service priorities and duties, including those outlined under Objective 2.
- d. Equality monitoring data is used for these purposes, but further improvement is needed to the access and use of equality data.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Deliver the data workstream of the embedding equality programme to ensure a corporate approach to the collection, publication and use of employee, customer and resident equality data.
- b. Develop, monitor and report equality and diversity performance measures.

Objective 5: Ensure our buildings, services and communications are accessible

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Review and publish accessibility statements for all our public buildings.
- b. Review and act on the findings of our EIA on council communications.

- c. Deliver additional equality actions identified within our Customer Service Programme.

Progress to date:

- a. 34 building audits were completed by AccessAble in late 2020 and building guides will be published in February 2021. A working group will develop an action plan to address recommendations by AccessAble.
- b. A contract was agreed with SignVideo to pilot provision of a free British Sign Language (BSL) video interpretation service enabling BSL speakers to contact the Authority's Contact Centre independently.
- c. Covid-19 guidance was published on the Authority's website in different languages and formats.
- d. Following the review of the Customer Service Programme, these actions will be progressed under the accessibility workstream of the embedding equality programme.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Implement the action plan based on AccessAble's findings.
- b. Complete roll out of SignVideo services to reception desks and evaluate the pilot.
- c. Agree and promote new translation and interpretation services.
- d. Implement the equality actions from the Customer Service Programme Review.

Objective 6 (new): Improve engagement with North Tyneside's diverse communities

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Support the Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force to develop and deliver its action plan.
- b. Appoint a new Engagement Officer with focus on engagement with diverse communities in the borough on the basis of their protected characteristics.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for on-going community engagement with these communities.
- d. Review and publicise local hate crime reporting procedures, linking with safeguarding processes where appropriate.

1.5.4 Implementation of the policy and objectives

Delivery of the objectives will enable implementation of the Policy. Performance measures and action plans will be developed for each of the Equality Objectives. These will be delivered through the embedding equality programme and be reflected in service plans.

The Equality Objectives will be reviewed every year and performance reported on an annual basis to Cabinet in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review.

Both the Policy and the Annual Equality and Diversity Review will be published on the Authority's website, and promoted widely.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

To approve the proposed amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy, and to the Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 2

To approve the proposed amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy, but not to the Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 3

To approve the amendments to Corporate Equality Objectives and actions, but not to the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Option 4

Not to approve the amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 5

To request changes to the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives and actions, prior to further consideration by Cabinet.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The Authority's approach to equality and diversity underpins all of its decision-making including key plans and policies. Approval of the recommended option will ensure that the Authority has a current Equality and Diversity Policy that reflects both current legislation and the context within which the Authority is operating.

The proposed Corporate Equality Objectives and actions will enable implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Equality and Diversity Policy 2021 – proposed amendments

Appendix 2: North Tyneside Council's Customer Promise

Appendix 3: North Tyneside Council's Values

1.9 Contact officers:

Jacqueline Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy, tel. (0191) 6435724

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1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [Cabinet Report Equality and Diversity Policy – 21 January 2019](#)
- (2) [Cabinet Report Corporate Equality Objectives Progress Report - 20 January 2020](#)
- (3) [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- (4) [Equality Act 2010: Guidance](#) Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission – updated 16 June 2015

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The costs of delivery are included in existing service budgets and no additional costs are anticipated.

2.2 Legal

Publication of the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives demonstrates the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity and to compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty provided by section 149 of that Act.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation on the Equality and Diversity Policy ran from 25 November 2020 until 26 January 2021.

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Views were sought from: Deputy Mayor, Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Equality Group, Trades Unions and employees. The consultation was promoted via the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted internally through the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork; and externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Participation was sought from AgeUK, Youth Council, Church of England, Catholic Church, North East Sikh Service, Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force (which includes Black, Muslim and Jewish community representatives, Show Racism the Red Card, Tyne Coast College, North Tyneside Business Forum, Department for Work and Pensions, North Tyneside VODA and Nexus), North Tyneside Disability Forum, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People, Learning Disability North East, North Tyneside Women's Voices, Barnardos, Peary House, Action on Hearing Loss, North Tyneside Carers Centre, Northern Pride, North Tyneside Residents Panel and local people.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media

124 responses were received. The feedback received was positive and informed the amendments made to the policy or to the new actions underpinning the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives.

2.4 Human rights

The 2010 Equality Act created a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The human characteristics protected by the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act is therefore of particular pertinence to the Human Rights of freedom of thought, belief and religion; freedom of expression; the right to marry; and protection from discrimination.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The policy provides the framework for work undertaken by the Authority to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, and to fulfil its commitment that North Tyneside becomes a place where people feel safe and no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of their characteristics, background or personal circumstances.

The policy and corporate objectives demonstrate the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity as a leading local employer, service provider and commissioner. It also makes clear the responsibility that everyone who represents North Tyneside Council or who delivers services on the Authority's behalf has for its implementation.

2.6 Risk management

The effectiveness of the Authority's equality and diversity processes are monitored every quarter as part of North Tyneside Council's risk management processes and are reported via the Corporate Strategic Risk Register.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. However, the policy does affirm the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity and highlights

that the Authority will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any grounds and will take action against it.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive x
- Head(s) of Service x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) x
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer x
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service x

Equality and Diversity Policy

Date: January 2021 **Version:** 1 **Author:** Policy,
Performance and Research



Document Number	E&DPOL 3	Document Revision Number	2
Date last Reviewed	<i>January 2021</i>	Planned Review Date	<i>December 2022</i>
Document Owner	Senior Leadership Team		
Reviewed By	Corporate Equality Group		
Document status	This document does not form part of an employee's terms and conditions of employment and can therefore be reviewed, amended and withdrawn at the discretion of the Council.		

This Equality and Diversity Policy evidences due regard to the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty referred to in that Act. The policy consists of ten sections:

1. Purpose
2. Accountability
3. Legal and policy framework
4. Our Commitments
5. Equality and diversity in employment
6. Equality and Diversity in service provision
7. Equality and Diversity in procurement and commissioning
8. Our responsibilities
9. Governance, implementation and monitoring
10. Review

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how North Tyneside Council seeks to:

- ensure compliance with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty, and thereby
- achieve its aim that North Tyneside is **becomes** a place where people feel safe and no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of their [characteristics](#), background or personal circumstances¹.

2. Accountability

The policy is the responsibility of Cabinet and sits within the Human Resources portfolio held by the Deputy Mayor, and with the Chief Executive.

Oversight of the policy, its implementation and monitoring rests with Senior Leadership Team, supported by the [Corporate Equality Group](#) (whose members include representatives from service areas, trades unions and our Strategic Partners). **and which** It is chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

However, equality affects and involves everyone and as individuals we are all responsible for own actions and efforts.

3. Legal and policy framework

The content of the policy is determined by the following:

- The [2010 Equality Act](#)
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- Codes of practice published by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

As one of the borough's leading service providers and employers, **and in accordance with our corporate values**, North Tyneside Council is committed to developing the borough to be an inclusive place in which to live, work, visit and invest to achieve the ambitions of **set out in** the [Our North Tyneside Plan](#).

4. Our commitments

To achieve our purpose set out in section 1 above North Tyneside Council will:

- a) proactively embed equality and diversity considerations in everything we do and challenge others to do the same
- b) meet all our legal equality duties under the [2010 Equality Act](#), the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and follow codes of practice published by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

¹ Protected characteristics cover everyone – we are all a mix of multiple visible and invisible protected characteristics.

- c) not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation or any other prohibited conduct on any grounds, **and will take action against it.** This includes all forms of hatred including those **targeting protected characteristics such as anti-Semitism** as defined by the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) definition and supporting guidance](#), racism, sexism, ageism, **disablism, religion, Islamophobia**, homophobia and transphobia (this is not an exhaustive list)
- d) **raise awareness of how to report discrimination, harassment and victimisation and the support that is available**
- e) publish our equality objectives, equality data² and report progress in [our Annual Equality and Diversity Review](#)
- f) undertake and implement the actions from [Equality Impact Assessments](#) on significant decisions, policies, plans, practices and procedures
- g) ensure people with protected characteristics feel listened to, and have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions about our services
- h) build understanding amongst residents, employees, partners and elected members of the needs **and values** of different protected groups across North Tyneside
- i) take account of, and respond to, the needs of residents and customers, **ensuring with protected characteristics are given due consideration** when delivering our services
- j) create an environment where elected members, employees, residents and visitors are confident to be themselves **and meet the aims of the Act**
- k) strive to make our workforce more representative of the borough's population and the residents it serves, by ensuring equal access to jobs, training and career progression
- l) require others providing services on our behalf **to** follow its approach to equality.

² [Equality data](#)

Where we ask employees and service users to provide us with personal information, this will only be used to improve access to and the quality of the services we provide.

Collecting equality information helps us to:

- understand the needs of our residents
- design policies and services which are effective and meet those needs
- demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and its other statutory duties
- measure more effectively how we are improving as an employer and a service provider.

We will only collect information when it is relevant and will be used by managers to develop an understanding of take up and need. While employees and service users are encouraged to provide equality information, it is their choice whether or not to answer all the questions. Confidential information will be handled in accordance with the strict controls of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the information gathered will be used to inform the Authority's policy and planning, and to report on performance.

5. Equality and Diversity in Employment

This section applies to all employees and people seeking work with us. As outlined in our **Human Resources and Organisational Development and Employment and Skills strategies** as a local employer we have a key role to play in tackling inequality and discrimination. We aim to positively promote equality of opportunity through all of our employment policies and practices: including recruitment, terms and conditions, learning and development, promotion and when ending employment.

We will:

- a) provide equality of opportunity to all applicants and prospective applicants through fair recruitment and selection procedures
- b) recognise that people with particular protected characteristics, including people with disabilities or from **Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME)** communities, may experience discrimination in employment, and we will adopt selection and retention practices designed to eliminate any such discrimination ~~therefore seek to take positive and proportionate action to recruit and retain employees from such groups, while~~ always taking into consideration the duty to appoint on merit
- c) make reasonable adjustments to enable the employment and redeployment of employees with disabilities
- d) annually publish gender pay gap data and any other pay gap data required by law
- e) use the information and feedback we collect to understand more about, and respond to, employee's experience of working for the Authority
- f) ensure that all employees are considered for promotion on the basis of their merits, abilities and skills, and are given equal opportunities to progress within the Authority
- g) create an appropriate balance between work and home commitments to maximise equal opportunities for all, **including promoting flexible working where possible**
- h) ~~wherever possible,~~ aim to give employees the training and development opportunities needed to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Authority and themselves
- i) ensure that all employees undertake equality training so that they understand its importance in the workplace and in service delivery and know how to challenge any inappropriate behaviour
- j) develop an anti-discriminatory and supportive culture where employees are aware of their rights and enjoy working for the Authority
- k) respond to any allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment through appropriate internal processes, including our **disciplinary and whistleblowing** procedures.

6. Equality and Diversity in Service Provision

We and our strategic partners will seek to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all current and potential service users **in accordance with our customer promise and corporate values.**

We will:

- a) use our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to help us challenge, review, monitor and improve our services, working practices and resource allocation
- b) ensure all of our customers receive services in accordance with our customer promise and that reasonable adjustments are made
- c) use a range of channels to enable service users to access our services independently and appropriately
- d) ensure that the information we provide can be read or received and understood by the people for whom it is intended
- e) ensure that all buildings, facilities and services used by our customers are welcoming and accessible
- f) work with our partners to tackle any discrimination affecting groups within our communities, ensuring that clear procedures are in place for reporting any such discrimination
- g) use the equality data we collect to identify and take action to address the needs of under represented groups, those who are disadvantaged or have particular needs due to their characteristics
- h) involve residents in shaping our services through inclusive engagement and consultation.

7. Equality and Diversity in Procurement and Commissioning

We will ensure that our procurement and commissioning practices (as set out in our [Procurement Strategy and Social Value Priorities](#)) fulfil our equality duties by endeavouring to ensure ensuring that:

- a) contractors, suppliers, and strategic and commissioned partners:
 - i. are aware of the authority's position on equality, we will include a commitment to equality in tender specifications
 - ii. where appropriate and necessary, evidence the integration of the relevant equality principles into their policies and procedures. have an equality policy that is compliant with national and European public procurement legislation and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- b) our selection and tendering processes address and include equality considerations
- c) our contract monitoring processes are inclusive of equalities considerations
- d) relevant employees receive guidance on equality issues for procurement.

8. Our responsibilities

Equality, and the implementation of this policy, is the responsibility of all elected members, employees and everyone who represents the Authority or delivers services on its behalf (including our Strategic Partners – Engie and Capita and Keir). More specifically:

8.1 Everyone who works with or for North Tyneside Council

We all have a personal responsibility to:

- ensure our equality training and awareness is up to date
- treat our colleagues and customers with dignity and respect
- promote and deliver equality in the workplace and in serving local communities
- behave in a way that supports this policy and is compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice
- report, and if you consider it safe to do so, challenge any discriminatory behaviour or practices you encounter in the course of your work.

8.2 As Elected Members

Elected members have a responsibility to:

- lead the equality and diversity agenda of the Authority
- represent and provide leadership for all groups and communities across North Tyneside
- provide a scrutiny role
- have 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make.

8.3 As Leaders and Managers

Leaders and managers are also responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy in their service areas via their service planning process, this includes ensuring:

- the identification and elimination of discriminatory practices
- equality objectives and improvement actions identified in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review are included in service plans and progress is monitored to achieve timely delivery
- processes are in place to systematically collect and report equality performance management data
- an effective EIA of decisions, policies, plans, practices and procedures is undertaken
- service delivery demonstrates due regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics
- employees are fully aware of their individual equality responsibilities, and those of the organisation, under the Equality Act 2010.

8.4 As Trades Unions

Unions have a responsibility to:

- represent the views and concerns of their members on equality and diversity issues
- challenge and address any incidents of discrimination within workforce membership
- support the continuous improvement of equality policy and practice.

8.5 Strategic Partners

Our Strategic Partners have a responsibility to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty
- demonstrate 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make
- support the Authority to achieve the purpose of this policy – including active participation in the work of the Corporate Equality Group.

8.6 Partnership Boards

The Partnership Boards at which North Tyneside Council is represented are expected to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- demonstrate 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make
- support the Authority to achieve the purpose of this policy.

8.7 Volunteers and other partners

Volunteers and other partners (defined as those who work alongside the Authority but are not commissioned) are expected to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- support North Tyneside Council to achieve the purpose of this policy.

9. Governance, implementation and monitoring

As set out in Sections 2 and 3 above, this policy is the responsibility of Cabinet, and sits within the Human Resources portfolio held by the Deputy Mayor.

Oversight of the policy, its implementation and monitoring rests with the Senior Leadership Team, supported by Corporate Equality Group which is chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

We assess and monitor our progress against the purpose of this policy by:

- regular reports to the Cabinet Champion for Equality and Diversity and the Senior Leadership Team
- the activity of Corporate Equality Group, which leads the equality work of the organisation and co-ordinates a range of activities to help the Authority fulfil its equality duties in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty
- the inclusion and delivery of actions within our service plans that contribute to the achievement of the commitments made in this policy and the corporate equality objectives and service actions identified in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review
- our EIA process to ensure **elected members and officers** properly consider the potential impact of **operational, and** Cabinet and Full Council decisions on protected groups
- the identification of the equality and engagement implications of the decisions recommended in our Cabinet and Full Council reports
- managing any potential equality risks through our Risk Management Process
- publication of equality data as required by government, including Gender Pay Gap reporting

- dealing with any complaints³ of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, or any other prohibited conduct seriously, promptly and confidentially and ensuring that any person who feels they have suffered any form of discrimination by the Authority is given guidance in making a [complaint](#)
- publication on our website of our Annual Equality and Diversity Review, which reports progress reports against our Corporate Equality Objectives and service equality actions and is evaluated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to check accessibility and compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and the outcome of the review will be reported to Cabinet. However, we will be guided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission if any new guidance or legislation is produced before the next review date.

The next review will be undertaken by December **2022**.

³ In relation to specific types of complaints:

- employee complaints - should an employee have any complaint in respect of their treatment in relation to this policy, this should be taken up through internal processes, such as our disciplinary processes
- public complaints - information on how to make a complaint can be found in our libraries, leisure centres, customer first buildings and Quadrant headquarters or [here](#)
- complaints about the behaviour of an Elected Member - information on how to make a complaint about an Elected Member who has not acted in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Appendix 2: North Tyneside Council's Customer Promise

We listen, we care: our customer promise to you

We are here to serve you, our residents, businesses and visitors. We provide you with a wide range of vital services, from bin collections to social care, often in complicated and difficult circumstances. We strive to deliver excellent customer service to keep North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit.

Through listening, we have learned what matters to you, and we have developed this promise.

We listen

- We take time to fully understand and meet your individual needs.
- We are open, honest and use clear language in all our communication.
- Where appropriate, we prefer to serve you via our website, but if this is not right for you, there are different ways to contact us and use our services.
- We use your experiences to design our services and help communities to get involved.

We care

- We put you in contact with the right person and, when possible, tell you how long it will take to solve your query.
- We keep you informed with up to date information and explain what we have done.
- We treat you with courtesy, politeness and understanding.
- We keep your personal data secure and respect your privacy.
- We admit when we are wrong, we say sorry, and make every effort to put it right.
- We give you straightforward and clear advice about the services that are available to you.
- We work together as a team who support and respect each other.

You can help us to keep our promise by:

- Letting us know if you have any specific needs.
- Giving us the information we need to deal with your enquiry.
- Telling us when we have done a good job.
- Treating us politely and with respect.
- Telling us how you feel about our service by giving us feedback so we can learn and improve.

Please tell us how we are doing by:

- Leaving comments at one of our Community Conversation Corners in our Customer First Centres.
- E-mailing your comments to: engagement@northtyneside.gov.uk

Appendix 3: North Tyneside Council Values

Our values:

We listen.

We listen to our customers and colleagues and understand their needs. We pay attention to messages and respond. We express information clearly, are open, honest and encourage people to have their say.

We care

We care for our customers by understanding their needs, we treat them with respect and safeguard those who are most vulnerable. We care for each other by being a positive role model. We respect each other and work well with colleagues. We care for ourselves by looking after our physical and mental health and asking for help when we need it.

We are ambitious

We are ambitious by always looking for ways to do things better. We are positive and learn from our mistakes and successes. We can be ambitious by reflecting on our performance and acting on feedback to improve. We strive to reduce the carbon footprint in our services by using less energy in our buildings, travelling less in our vehicles and recycling as much as possible.

We can be good value for money

We can be good value for money by delivering services in line with our customer promise and service standards. We use resources carefully, avoid unnecessary cost, try to get things right first time and share resources with colleagues.