

Bolsover District Council

Executive

3rd October 2016

Joint Equality and Diversity Policy for Service Delivery

Report of the Assistant Director Customer Service and Improvement

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To consider and approve the draft joint Equality and Diversity Policy for Service Delivery.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 Both Councils have very good mechanisms in place to fulfil our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure a consistent approach across both Councils which supports our legal obligations with regard to equality and helps us to treat people fairly. It sets out what our responsibilities are and the systems and mechanisms we have in place to help us to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations between different groups
- 1.3 Responsibilities under the policy are clearly set out. A good understanding of the policy will ensure that equality considerations are given 'due regard' as required by the Equality Act 2010 and applied consistently throughout the Councils' public functions.
- 1.4 The policy will be beneficial in dealing with the Local Government Ombudsman and complaints submitted that have an equality/diversity aspect. The Ombudsman looks for an overarching approach to equality in respect to service delivery and this policy will support that, particularly in respect to disability issues.
- 1.5 The policy draws extensively on the statutory Codes of Practice and non-statutory guidance of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the national body which is responsible for safeguarding and enforcing the laws that protect people's rights to fairness, dignity and respect.
- 1.6 The policy does not apply to our employment functions. The Councils have comprehensive employment policies and monitor their employment practices to

ensure that no-one is treated unfairly at any stage when applying for jobs or following appointment.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The policy pulls together the mechanisms that both Councils have in place to meet and support our equality obligations and sets that information within a policy context. This enables both Councils to have one higher level document that references the component elements – legal obligations, best practice, Council mechanisms/systems and responsibilities – in one place. This helps to clearly set out our approach to equality for service delivery and makes it easier to achieve consistency.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 A programme of consultation was undertaken which included circulation of a draft policy to Directors and Assistant Directors and Managers, Improvement Groups and each Council's own reference group – the Equality Panel at BDC and the Disabled People's Joint Consultative Group at NEDDC.
- 3.2 These comments have been considered and the majority of them incorporated into the policy notably making the harassment section clearer and providing examples to illustrate.
- 3.3 The final draft policy was taken to SAMT for consideration on 22nd July 2016. A couple of minor amendments were agreed before endorsing the policy's continuation along the approval route.
- 3.4 The policy was taken to SAJC for consideration on 31st August 2016 who endorsed the policy.
- 3.5 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not specifically required for this policy based on its content.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 To not have a joint policy on equality and diversity for service delivery. As detailed in the report it is felt beneficial to put this information together in a policy context.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

The policy clearly sets out our approach to equality for service delivery and reduces the risk of 'due regard' for equality considerations not being undertaken.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

We have a duty to comply with statutory equality duties. The policy makes this clear.

5.3 **Human Resources Implications**

None specifically for this report.

6 **Recommendations**

6.1 To approve the Joint Equality and Diversity Policy for Service Delivery.

7 **Decision Information**

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	Not applicable
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Providing our Customers with Excellent Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting equality & diversity• Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people

8 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
1	Joint Equality and Diversity Policy for Service Delivery (Final Version for approval)
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
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Report Reference –