

Report title: Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2024-27)

Meeting	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	2 August 2024
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	TBC at time of writing
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No N/A (at Scrutiny)
<p>Purpose of Report To introduce the draft Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (I&D Strategy) for feedback and consideration.</p> <p>A draft of the proposed I&D Strategy is attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p>The finalised I&D Strategy is scheduled to be considered at Cabinet for adoption on 10th September 2024.</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>OSMC is asked to provide any comments on the draft strategy to assist in the development and eventual delivery of the strategy's outcomes.</p> <p>OSMC is asked to note that the strategy is scheduled for decision at Cabinet on 10th September 2024.</p> <p>Reasons for Recommendations The Council is under a statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish one or more equality objectives every four years. To date we have fulfilled this requirement through our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Strategy.</p> <p>For several iterations of our I&D Strategy, the Council has also identified various elements of inclusion and diversity as strategic priorities beyond the core requirements of the legislation. For this reason, our recent strategies have all sought to deliver 'beyond compliance' and are decided more frequently than the four year statutory requirement.</p> <p>The new strategy appended to this report builds on the learning and progress made in previous strategies and sets out priorities that support a wide set of outcomes for communities in Kirklees and our workforce.</p>	
<p>Resource Implication: At this point in time the implementation of the strategy will be taken forward within existing budgets and draw upon the established capacity across the organisation.</p>	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	22nd July 2024

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Executive Summary

The Council is under a statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish one or more equality objectives every four years. To date we have fulfilled this requirement through our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Strategy.

For several iterations of our I&D Strategy, the Council has also identified various elements of inclusion and diversity as strategic priorities beyond the core requirements of the legislation. For this reason, our recent strategies have all sought to deliver 'beyond compliance' and are decided more frequently than the four year statutory requirement.

The proposed strategy sets out the three elements of our role as a Council with inclusion and diversity:

1. **Compliance:** how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010
2. **Ambition:** how we achieve our ambitions for inclusion as an organisational value (as set out in the Council Plan) and create an inclusive culture and support a diverse workforce and district through four priority themes from the Local Government Association's Equality Framework:
 - Understanding and working with our communities
 - Leadership, partnership, and organisational development
 - Responsive services and customer care
 - Diverse and engaged workforce
3. **Partnership:** how we enable inclusion more broadly in Kirklees:
 - As an anchor organisation (being a large, locally-rooted employer and spender)
 - As a co-ordinator and facilitator, leading through partnerships
 - As a service deliverer through our services and programmes

The new strategy appended to this report builds on the learning and progress made in previous strategies and sets out priorities that support a wide set of outcomes for communities in Kirklees and our workforce.

2. Information required to take a decision

The Council is under a statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish one or more equality objectives every four years. To date we have fulfilled this requirement through our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Strategy.

For several iterations of our I&D Strategy, the Council has also identified various elements of inclusion and diversity as strategic priorities beyond the core requirements of the legislation. For this reason, our recent strategies have all sought to deliver 'beyond compliance' and are decided more frequently than the four year statutory requirement.

Our last strategy, entitled Recovery through Inclusion, recognised the adverse impact of the global Covid pandemic and focussed on a recovery phase, ensuring the correct strategic focus to support both communities the workforce.

The new strategy appended to this report builds on the learning and progress made in previous strategies and sets out priorities that support a wide set of outcomes for communities in Kirklees and our workforce.

Key areas of progress from the strategy include changes to Integrated Impact Assessments, the creation of the Inclusion Learning Framework, and new approaches to supporting a diverse workforce and employee networks. These are captured through three 'Always On' priorities:

- a. Understanding impact
- b. Understanding diversity
- c. Understanding equity

Alongside the 'Always On' priorities, the proposed strategy sets out the three elements of our role as a Council with inclusion and diversity:

1. **Compliance:** how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010
2. **Ambition:** how we achieve our ambitions for inclusion as an organisational value (as set out in the Council Plan) and create an inclusive culture and support a diverse workforce and district through four priority themes from the Local Government Association's Equality Framework:
 1. Understanding and working with our communities
 2. Leadership, partnership, and organisational development
 3. Responsive services and customer care
 4. Diverse and engaged workforce
3. **Partnership:** how we enable inclusion more broadly in Kirklees:
 1. As an anchor organisation (being a large, locally-rooted employer and spender)
 2. As a co-ordinator and facilitator, leading through partnerships
 3. As a service deliverer through our services and programmes

Against each of the four ambition themes are a set of objectives. They are:

1. Understanding and working with our communities
 - Embedding our commitment to the Inclusive Communities Framework (ICF)
 - Higher quality integrated impact assessments more broadly used
 - Enable place-based responses to the unique challenges and opportunities in each place, enabling conversations between faiths and supporting leadership programmes for underrepresented groups
 - Understanding poverty and mitigating the inequitable impact of cost-of-living pressures
 - An inclusive approach to social connectivity
 - Enhanced support for care-experienced people

2. Leadership, partnership, and organisational development
 - Embedding our commitment to inclusion through the Our Council Plan and key partnership strategies
 - Use the social model of disability to promote inclusion for disabled people
 - Organisational improvement and transformation of our day-to-day work
 - Developing champions and a community of practice
3. Responsive services and customer care
 - Embedding our commitment to inclusion through our Access to Services Strategy
 - Developing our data about our residents and customers
 - Promoting inclusive customer access to services
4. Diverse and engaged workforce
 - Embedding our commitment to inclusion through the People Strategy
 - Promoting inclusion through workforce planning, prioritising pathways for underrepresented groups
 - Enhancing our workforce data, with a focus on race and disability
 - Being an inclusive employer of choice
 - Supporting Employee Networks to play a bigger role in promoting inclusion and supporting the organisation's priorities
 - Continuing to develop our excellent learning and organisational development offer to promote inclusion

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The I&D Strategy will support the delivery of our overall policy framework, including the Council Plan and our top-tier partnership strategies: Kirklees Inclusive Economic Strategy (once adopted), Environment Strategy (once adopted), the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Inclusive Communities Framework.

Fair and balanced priority

Robust I&D plans support fairness in our financial plans.

Transforming services priority

The 'golden thread' of the inclusion is woven throughout many other significant transformation activities across the organisation, such as Our Kirklees Futures, the Access to Services Strategy, the People Strategy, and the Data & Insight Strategy.

Greener and healthier priority

Climate change is an integral part of the Integrated Impact Assessment process; embedding the new process across the entire organisation and continuing with robust quality assurance measures will be crucial to the success of inclusion becoming more of a reality in service planning and delivery.

Investing for the future priority

Robust I&D plans can help to ensure our investment plans benefit a wide variety of communities.

People, partners, and place

The essence of the new strategy is about improving outcomes for those who live and work in Kirklees, particularly those who are impacted by inequalities.

As above, working in partnership is one of the three key roles we have in delivering our I&D Strategy. It will be crucial to the effective implementation of the strategy – not least in terms of utilising partnership-based data and intelligence in order to tackle inequalities.

If we are to understand better the needs of our communities and work more collaboratively with them on solutions to inequalities, this will have to be done in a place-based manner, given the district's diversity. This strategy will build on and support the principles in the Inclusive Communities Framework, enabling communities to lead the responses to the unique challenges faced within their places.

3.2 **Financial Implications**

At this point in time the implementation of the strategy will be taken forward within existing budgets and draw upon the established capacity across the organisation.

3.3 **Legal Implications**

The Council is under a statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish one or more equality objectives every four years. We are fulfilling this requirement through our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Strategy.

3.4 **Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

As the strategy progresses through the decision-making fora and is agreed by councillors, it will be imperative to have an active communication campaign to raise awareness of the new objectives and outcomes within the strategy.

- **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

The IIA is in development and will be published alongside the decision-making process. The I&D Strategy will support positive equality outcomes and access to services.

4 **Consultation**

Structured consultation has taken place with various leadership teams and employee networks across the organisation, requesting comments on the draft proposals. These have informed the draft presented today.

5 **Engagement**

This new strategy has been developed through an enhanced engagement process across both internal and external stakeholders. Through this engagement, we were able to add additional context to some of the data around inequalities across the district and explore the practical aspects of the delivery of our priority objectives. By speaking with officers across the organisation, we have gained a broad understanding of the challenges faced in both service delivery and in supporting colleagues. This evidence base has driven the content of our objectives.

6 **Options**

6.1 **Options Considered**

Scope of the strategy

1. A basic strategy complying with the legislative requirements
2. A more developed strategy relating to our organisational ambitions.

Option 2 was decided after discussion with the Leader, portfolio holder, and senior officers.

We also considered a number of activities for the strategy. The ones chosen are considered the most important and cost-effective.

6.2 **Reasons for recommended Option**

The objectives set out in the strategy were chosen because of their importance and because they are mostly already resourced. In some cases, these actions are legally required.

7 **Next steps and timelines**

The strategy is scheduled for consideration at Cabinet on the 10th September 2024. Management of the delivery of the strategy will commence shortly after decision.

8 **Contact officers**

Stephen Bonnell; Head of Policy, Partnerships & Corporate Planning
stephen.bonnell@kirklees.gov.uk

Sarah Harris; Policy and Partnerships Officer
sarah.harris@kirklees.gov.uk

9 **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

The last Inclusion & Diversity Strategy is available on the Council's website.

[Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2021-2023 | Kirklees Council](#)

10 **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Inclusion & Diversity Strategy 2024-2027

11 **Service Director responsible**

Andy Simcox
Service Director for Strategy & Innovation
Andy.Simcox@kirklees.gov.uk