

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

EQUALITY SCHEME 2018-21

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose a revised Equality Scheme for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- 1.2 The Scheme meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and has been developed by the council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group.
- 1.3 The council's new Equality Scheme will reflect the five new equality objectives as set out in the Equality Policy 2018.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorses the new Equality Scheme and recommends its approval to Council.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group has developed a revised Equality Scheme which will replace the previously published Scheme for Welwyn Hatfield Council. The proposed new Scheme is fully compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. In addition to the requirement for the council to take positive steps to prevent discrimination and promote good relations among people from different groups, the council, as a public authority, is also required to publish an Equality Scheme. This sets out our equality objectives and explains the actions we intend to take to achieve them. We are also required to state how we have consulted on our Equality Scheme.
- 3.2 The proposed new Equality Scheme provides a framework for ensuring that our commitment towards equal opportunities is reflected in all the services we deliver, including those which we provide as an employer and partner to other organisations.
- 3.3 The Equality Scheme sets out five equality objectives. These are:
  1. We will lead by example within the community, promoting equality of opportunity and fairness.
  2. We will value and understand the diversity of our communities, for the benefit of our customers and all residents of the borough.
  3. We will deliver fully accessible, fair and inclusive services.
  4. We will provide equal opportunities to our employees and encourage a culture of equality within the work place.

5. We will consult with residents and the community on matters which affect them, taking into account the diversity of our borough.
- 3.4 An Equality Plan is published within the new Equality Scheme. This will set out how the objectives will be delivered and monitored over a two year period.
- 3.5 Consultation has taken place during the development of the Equality Scheme. Consultees included residents, tenants and other service users, council employees, partnerships/organisations and contractors. We received 72 responses and these included numerous comments and suggestions.

#### **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The proposed new Equality Scheme is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The Scheme provides for fulfilment of the council's General and Specific Equality Duties, as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

#### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 The cost of implementation and the ongoing management of the Equalities Scheme will be contained existing service budgets.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:

Breaches of the Equality Act by council could result in customer complaints, criminal proceedings, employment tribunals, fines, reputational damage and reduced opportunities for partnership working in the future.

- 6.2 The Equality Scheme will help to mitigate the risk of any future litigation against the council for non-compliance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

#### **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 There are no known security and terrorism implications associated with this recommendation.

#### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 8.1 There are no direct procurement implications associated with this recommendation.

#### **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications associated with this recommendation.

## **10 Link to Corporate Priorities**

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Promoting equality and fairness and improving public health and wellbeing, and is linked to a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

10.2 However by providing greater equality of opportunity for staff, residents, contractors and employers, the implementation of this Scheme will help to meet all of the council's corporate priorities.

## **11 Equality and Diversity**

11.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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### **Appendix**

Equality Scheme 2018-21 including Action Plan