



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

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Document History

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1 Introduction

1.1 Rugby Borough Council's focus is on ***doing what's right for Rugby***, and to support delivery of this focus the Council has identified the following priorities in its Corporate Strategy 2021 – 2024¹:

- **Climate - Outcome 1:** "Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change."
- **Economy - Outcome 2:** "Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits all residents."
- **Health & Communities - Outcome 3:** "Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected."
- **Organisation - Outcome 4:** "Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation."

These outcomes are supplemented by the following Equality Objectives:

- Equality and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.
- Improve the quality of equality data collected from our customers and staff and ensure it is used to inform equality impact assessments and council decision making processes with regard to policy, service design and delivery.
- To develop and foster good relations between different groups and communities.
- Diverse workforce that better reflects the community it serves.
- All employees feel safe, valued, and supported.

1.2 Rugby Borough Council has a longstanding track record of working to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion practice, in relation to both service delivery and employment, ensuring it is fully integrated into everything the Council does – as a leader in the community, as a provider of services, and as an employer.

1.3 In recognition of this, in February 2014 and May 2017 the Council was externally assessed as having achieved the 'Excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government².

1.4 The Council recognises that we serve a diverse community with differing needs and acknowledge that for a variety of reasons there are some groups of people who are prevented from taking part fully in their community.

¹ <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/corporatestrategy>

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/equality-framework-local-government-eflg-2021>

- 1.5 The Council accepts that discrimination is a major barrier to a fair and just society and recognise that there are certain groups of individuals who are likely to need more protection than others and therefore will actively seek to ensure that these groups of people are protected and that their access to opportunities is actively promoted.
- 1.6 It is the responsibility of all Councillors and staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. The Councillors and Leadership Team are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation by ensuring our internal processes and ways of working promote equality and ensure that no one is disadvantaged by how we operate as an organisation.
- 1.7 This Policy statement sets out our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and provides the overarching context within which we work.

2 Legislative Context for Equality and Diversity

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010³ was introduced to consolidate and strengthen all previous anti-discrimination legislation. It covers the following protected characteristics:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race/ethnicity
 - religion and belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation.
- 2.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) places a general duty on the Council and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - foster good relation between different groups.

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

- 2.3 This section also places specific duties on public bodies to publish data on customers and workforce annually and equality objectives every four years.
- 2.4 In meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Borough Council will in all its decision making, policy setting and service delivery have due regard and will ensure equalities is integrated into our day-to-day work and that we positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fostering good relations. Rugby Borough Council's method for complying is through the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). An EqIA is a way of finding out whether a decision affects different groups of people in different ways. These assessments must be undertaken to comply with our organisational commitments and statutory obligations.

3 Our Roles and Responsibilities

a. Rugby Borough Council as a Service Provider

- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to the whole community.
- Provide clear and accessible information about services in a variety of formats and languages, as appropriate.
- Challenge, review and monitor services, working practices and resource allocations to ensure that they do not discriminate, and identify where improvements can be made.
- Ensure that appropriate consultation / engagement methods are identified to enable the community to have a say on the way the council plans and delivers its services.

b. Rugby Borough Council's policy, strategy and decision making procedures

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion issues are considered in the development of all policies and strategies.
- Develop policies and strategies to reduce the inequality faced by whole communities or individuals.
- Ensure the Council is fully aware of any adverse impacts that may occur because of decisions made, and actively seek to mitigate any negative impact.
- Regularly evaluate the impact of polices and strategies with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

c. Rugby Borough Council as Commissioner of services

- Ensure contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of the Council's position on equality and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Ensure our contract monitoring processes are inclusive of equalities considerations.
- Ensure that when we purchase or commission services from organisations, we are confident that these organisations respect equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is built into our processes and procedures around procurement and commissioning.

d. Rugby Borough Council as an employer

- Promote equality of opportunity for all staff.
- Make reasonable adjustments to allow staff to fulfil their potential and take action, where it is needed, to tackle inequality and promote diversity.
- Protect and promote the health, wellbeing and safety of all staff.
- Ensure our recruitment practices and procedures do not discriminate against anyone.
- Monitor our workforce regularly to identify any issues in regards to equal opportunity or development.
- Enable, encourage and support staff to report discrimination or harassment in the workplace.

4 Governance and Accountability

- 4.1 Within the Council, all Councillors and staff have a part to play in challenging discrimination and in implementing this policy.
- 4.2 Councillors are responsible for leading the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, providing a scrutiny role, prioritising resources and community leadership generally.
- 4.3 The Councillors, Executive Director and Leadership Team are responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the equality and diversity agenda, through the Strategic Equality & Diversity Steering Group.

- 4.4 Chief Officers and Management Teams are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy in their service areas, and their service planning process. They should identify any discriminatory practices, include equality objectives, and develop criteria for success. Human Resources professionals lead on equality, diversity and inclusion issues in respect of employment policy and practice throughout the Council.
- 4.5 Unions have a responsibility to represent the views and concerns of staff on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and in supporting the continuous improvement of equality policy and practice.
- 4.6 All staff have an individual responsibility for promoting and delivering equality in the workplace and in serving the community. This expectation will be communicated to all new staff via the induction process.

5 Monitoring and Measuring Progress

- 5.1 We will adopt a rolling programme to review, monitor and evaluate all policies, procedures and practices, both in service delivery and employment, from an equality perspective, to ensure that they conform to this Policy, as well as legislative and other external requirements. Progress will be monitored by the Strategic Equality & Diversity Steering Group.
- 5.2 Where we ask employees and service users to provide us with personal equality information, this will only be used to improve access to services and the quality of the services we provide. In order to succeed in this, we require the co-operation and understanding of our staff and service users. Specific information on this is available in the Equality Monitoring guidance.

6 How to make a Compliment, Comment or Complaint?

Please contact us if you:

- Feel that you suffered discrimination in receiving any of the Council's services.
- Have a complaint that falls within our equality, diversity and inclusion policy statement.
- Want more information about the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion approaches.

- Have suggestions about the way that the Council could improve its approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We regard any comments and complaints as an opportunity to examine the quality of our services, and to proactively address the issues that have been raised. The details are as follows:

Customer Service Centre on (01788) 533533 or email contact.centre@rugby.gov.uk.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Council believes that any organisation should reflect all the communities and people it serves in both employment and service delivery. By implementing this Policy, the Council recognises its responsibilities and its leadership role within the community and aims to be a leading organisation in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity within Rugby.