

Runnymede Borough Council

Equality Objectives

Date

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

2023 – 2027

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Runnymede Borough Council recognises the importance of ensuring equality of opportunity and rights amongst all residents within its Borough, and within wider society.
- 1.2 The Council is conscious that individuals and groups can experience a range of barriers which may prevent them from enjoying the same quality of life as others. The Council's vision is to bridge any gaps there may be between its communities and to enhance the quality of life of its residents by ensuring that its services are accessible by all, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is protected under law.

2 EQUALITY ACT 2010

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (as amended) (the 2010 Act) identifies 9 different 'protected characteristics' being:
- (i) age;
 - (ii) disability;
 - (iii) gender reassignment;
 - (iv) marriage and civil partnership;
 - (v) pregnancy and maternity;
 - (vi) race;
 - (vii) religion or belief;
 - (viii) sex; and
 - (ix) sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The 2010 Act prohibits the direct or indirect discrimination of any person or group who has or shares a particular protected characteristic, where such direct or indirect discrimination occurs because of that particular protected characteristic.
- 2.3 Section 149 of the 2010 Act sets down a general duty for all public authorities. This duty requires that the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have 'due regard' to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people that do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 2.4 As well as the general duty described above, the Council also has two further specific legal duties (the respective aims of which are to help the Council comply with the general duty). The two specific duties are:
- (i) Publication of information which demonstrates the number / percentage of the Council's employees and other persons who are affected by its functions (the residents of the Borough) who share a protected characteristic, which must then be reviewed and

republished annually. This information can be viewed via this link to the Council's relevant webpage:

<https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/council-local-democracy/equalities/3>

(ii) Publication of one or more 'equality objectives', which must then be reviewed and republished no later than every four years. The Council's equality objectives for the period 2023 – 2027 are set out below.

3 THE OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Council had previously identified three key Equality Objectives for the period 2012 – 2016. These are:

Objective 1

The Council will take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that all its services, facilities and publications are accessible by all.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- Integration in all sectors of the community;
- An inclusive and thriving Borough;
- The elimination of inequality and discrimination.

Objective 2

The Council will endeavour to employ a diverse workforce which reflects the community that it services and to treat all its staff equally and fairly.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- A diverse and vibrant workforce;
- Equality of employment opportunity;
- Ensuring the Council is sensitive to the differing and various need of the Borough;

In certain circumstances, the doctrine of fairness and / or the Act may require the Council to treat certain staff members differently from others.

For example:

- A and B both work for the Council;
- A has a disability whilst B is not a disabled person;
- The Council makes such adjustments to A's workspace as it considers appropriate to accommodate their working needs in view of his disability, which includes providing him with a larger monitor screen than B.

Objective 3

The Council will endeavour to improve its collection and collation of data relating to equality issues within the Borough.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision for:

- Ensuring that it remains informed about the make-up of its Borough;
- Ensuring that it remains aware of the various concerns and issues relating to equality matters amongst its residents;
- Delivering a more efficient and focused service.

The Council within the review of its Objectives has decided to retain and refresh the three Objectives stated above and to add a fourth Objective which is stated below.

Objective 4

The Council will endeavour through its policies and actions to create a local environment in which local residents with one or more protected characteristics are better able to assist themselves.

This will help towards achieving the Council's vision:- "To be a community leader, providing high quality services, enhancing the environment and advocating for our community's interests" as stated at page 9 of the Council's current Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026.

The Corporate Business Plan also states at page 10 that "Our overall objective is to provide high quality services which are accessible, relevant and inclusive of all parts of our community".

A link to the current Corporate Business Plan is set out below: -

[Corporate Business Plan 2022- 2026 \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](https://runnymede.gov.uk)

Steps to be taken by the Council to meet the Objectives and how this will be measured.

- 3.2 Clearly, the Council will need to implement and undertake (or where appropriate continue to undertake) a number of procedures and / or steps, to ensure that it meets its four Equality Objectives, and will need to identify processes against which it can measure whether it has met the relevant objective. These procedures, steps and processes are set out in the table below.

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
Description	All services, facilities and publications are accessible by all.	Employ a diverse and inclusive workforce which reflects the community that it services and treat all staff equally, professionally, and fairly.	Improve its collection and collation of data relating to equality issues within the Borough.	Empower more people with protected characteristics to live safe, healthy, and independent lives
Steps	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that all Council buildings / facilities have been reasonably adjusted for those with accessibility issues including disabled or elderly residents; • Accounting for language barriers by, as far as reasonably possible, providing alternative language options / facilities in respect of its services and publications; • Providing publications in Braille and ensuring that as far as reasonably possible, its buildings, services and facilities are equipped to assist the deaf / hard of hearing. • Assisting those with mobility issues and that are therefore unable to visit the Council offices / facilities in person by providing quality 	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to comply with all relevant equality and employment legislation; • Ensure that the Council's recruitment processes ensure equal treatment to candidates from all backgrounds, to allow for equality of opportunity, except where reasonable adjustments are justified for reasons such as disability or language barriers; • Ensure that the Council continues to provide a place to work which is sensitive to the needs of all employees, and where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to cater for the differing needs of its staff; • Treat all staff equally and fairly, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, 	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cross departmental information sharing of data that relates to equality issues / protected characteristics, subject to any legal limitations or restrictions that may apply to such data sharing; • Increased number of information collecting / public consultation exercises; • Improved internal procedures for information gathering, recording and storage; • Continue to undertake screening and full equality impact assessments where appropriate. 	<p>Steps taken to meet this objective will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to comply with all relevant equality legislation; • Ensure that when decisions are made, participation is encouraged and facilitated for all protected characteristics including through the proposed Citizens Panel; • Continue to improve consultation and communication with other organisations and groups to engage with people with protected characteristics; • Seek to secure funding to assist with the delivery of this objective.

	<p>and efficient alternative options for those services such as by phone or internet; and where possible and reasonably necessary, provide home visits or liaising with other organisations to secure the assistance required.</p>	<p>disability, or any other protected characteristic that they may possess or share;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to undertake equality impact assessments of any proposed/amended policy or procedure or action; • Continue to undertake workplace Monitoring and publish the results on the Council's Website; • Continue to publish information on the Gender Pay Gap. • The Council has achieved Level 1 of the Disability Confident Employer Scheme will continue to strive to achieve Levels 2 and 3. 		
Measuring	<p>The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of its services, undertaking equalities impact assessments and through any complaints received</p>	<p>The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of its work force and statistics produced from these reviews, as well as from any feedback received from existing or former staff, or candidates for employment positions within the Council and identify any issues by undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment and implementing any outcome identified.</p>	<p>The extent to which the Council has met this objective, will be measured through the regular review of its information gathering procedures, assessments using equalities impact assessments, made and through an assessment of the quality of its data when it comes to reviewing and updating its Equality Objectives in 2027.</p>	<p>The extent to which the Council has met this objective will be measured through the regular review of the sources through which information is gathered, continued use of equalities impact assessments, measuring level of assistance given by the Council to local residents with regard to obtaining funding or advice on where and how to obtain funding, for proposed community/ local residents lead projects.</p>

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