



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Wealth Building, Social Justice, Equality and Diversity)	Council	Wednesday, 19 July 2023

## South Ribble Equality Objectives 2023/2027

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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### Purpose of the Report

- To set out the Council's Equality Objectives for 2023-27 and seek approval from Council.

### Recommendations to Council

- To approve the Equality Objectives for 2023-2027

### Reasons for recommendations

- The Equality Act (2010) establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which provides the statutory framework for public bodies to address inequality and discrimination.
- Under the specific requirements of the act, local authorities are required to put in place and publish Equality Objectives every four years.

### Other options considered and rejected

- No other options have been considered as the Council has a legal duty to undertake the publishing of its objectives.

### Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

<b>An exemplary council</b>	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

## Background to the report

6. The Equality Act (2010) establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which provides the statutory framework for public bodies to address inequality and discrimination.
7. Under the specific requirements of the act, local authorities are required to put in place and publish Equality Objectives every four years. The objectives are required to set out how as a council we will meet our obligations under the Public Sector Duty to:
  - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
  - Advance equality of opportunity,
  - Foster good relations between those who share relevant characteristics and those who do not.
8. The Council last set objectives in 2018 and our current objectives are out of date and require refreshing.

## Equality Objectives 2023/27

9. The Council is already undertaking a significant amount of positive action around the themes of equality and diversity. The objectives which have been defined and the associated actions for delivering outcomes against those objectives are based on the existing work and programmes of activity that the Council is committed to.
10. Whilst councils are required to state at least one objective, the Government Equalities Office recommends that the number of equality objectives must be proportionate to the size of an authority and achievable within the resources available to the organisation.
11. Five equality objectives have been identified for South Ribble to reflect ongoing commitments and programmes already being delivered.
12. The proposed objectives for the 2023/27 period are outlined below:

Duty	Objective
<b>Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	<p><b>Fostering and developing positive cultures and understanding:</b> Inclusive cultures do not just happen, our leaders, managers and all our employees must understand and model inclusive behaviours.</p> <p>We will ensure our staff have the skills, knowledge and awareness to be able to deliver services fairly and challenge unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviours.</p>
<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>	<p><b>Building an inclusive workforce:</b> To help attract, recruit and retain the best people for the job, we will develop an open, collaborative and inclusive working environment where the principles of fairness and wellbeing is promoted, and everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential.</p>
	<p><b>Ensure adequate access to services for all</b> All customers of the Council have a right to access services fairly and equally. To make sure we support each and every resident in</p>

Duty	Objective
	the right way we will regularly review and makes changes where needed to our services.
<b>Foster good relations between those who share relevant characteristics and those who do not</b>	<b>Support people in the community who are most in need</b> We will focus on ensuring that the health and wellbeing needs of the whole community are being addressed now and, in the future.
	<b>Involve our communities:</b> We will work widely to involve local people through the Community Hubs and engage openly with our residents and service users, seeking to capture all points of view to make better informed decisions.  Working with communities, involving them in decision making and listening to the lived experiences of all our residents is a key goal for the Council. We cannot tackle inequalities and exclusion without fostering good relations between people and understanding our diverse communities.

13. The Equality Objectives as set out are able to be integrated and embedded within the Council's existing strategies and programme of activities. The objectives and action plan seek to provide structure that clearly articulates how the council is meeting its public sector duty.
14. The full list of objectives and their associated actions is tabled at Appendix A.

### Implementation and Delivery

15. Many of the programmes and activities are already part of core business or agreed programmes. However, it will be important to ensure that we make progress against the objectives and that we have appropriate monitoring over time. To achieve this, the role of the Equality Champions and heads of service/responsible officers is to work collaboratively through a quarterly meeting coordinated by the Transformation and Partnerships service, who will monitor and maintain an action plan together with updating the Cabinet Member for Wealth Building, Social Justice, Equality and Diversity.

### Climate change and air quality

16. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

### Equality and diversity

17. An assessment of equality and diversity has been undertaken which has helped to identify those areas we should focus on, and in line with our existing commitments and work programmes, reflect those priority areas the council has already identified.
18. At the organisational level, the assessment identifies the role of training and opportunities for us to promote ways for us to better understand the needs of employees within the council.

19. For our communities, the assessment highlights the widening gap in inequalities and issues such as the cost of living, impacting the wider determinants of health and wellbeing which the objectives and actions seek to mitigate.
20. The nature of the activities and programme outlined are at the heart of the Council's commitment to supporting equality and diversity. The activities will have a positive impact in supporting the organisation to improving the quality of information we collect around equalities so that we can better assess and understand local and employee needs.
21. It also provides an opportunity through our equality Champions to provide a forum and space to openly challenge and support the way in which we advance equality and diversity across services and take forward within our culture the approach to seek continual improvement to ensuring our services are accessible.

### **Risk**

22. The risk to delivery is capacity across the organisation to complete the activities outlined in the action plan. However, as the majority of activities fall within existing programmes and service delivery, this mitigates risk against failure to deliver.
23. The action plan can be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the activities to achieve the objectives are relevant and effective.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

24. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

25. There are no concerns with this report from a Monitoring Officer perspective. Our Equality Objectives are designed to ensure that we fulfil our statutory duties.

### **Background documents**

There are no background papers to this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A Equality Objectives 2023/27 Action Plan

Appendix B Impact Assessment

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