

**6b REFERRAL FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 6 DECEMBER 2022
– EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022-2027**

RECOMMEND TO CABINET: That Cabinet:

- (1) Approve the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027 as attached at Appendix 1, subject to the amendment regarding the explanation of the term 'people of colour' and 'BME/BAME' in the Glossary and that the Glossary remains a live document which can be amended as required.
- (2) Approve the Equality objectives as set out below:
 1. Work with young people through youth engagement to make it easier for them to have their voices heard in local decision-making and democracy.
 2. Improve our engagement with marginalised, seldom heard, and new communities to make it easier for them to participate in local decision-making and democracy, and to have their views and experiences heard by the council.
 3. Improve our understanding of broader EDI issues and their impacts, such as neurodiversity and economic disadvantage; as well as the intersections between inequalities, using our Inclusion Group as a channel.
 4. Achieve consistency in measuring the likely equality impacts of our emerging policies and services.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: The previous Corporate Equality Strategy (2017) was revised to ensure consistency with the latest public sector equality legislation and obligations. The refresh of the Strategy reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to fulfil our legal obligations as set out in the Equality Act and to set out the new equality objectives.

The Policy Officer presented the report entitled 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027' and advised of the following:

- This was to replace the previous strategy adopted in 2017, which focussed on Equality, but not Diversity or Inclusion.
- The document sets out the legal duties on the Council, as well as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies outside of the legal requirements.
- There were four objectives to approve; two relating to residents and communities, one relating to the Council as an employer and one regarding the consistency of measuring impacts.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Raj Bhakar

The Chair noted that the term 'unconscious bias' was not included within the Glossary, despite being a frequently used term.

In response to questions the Policy Officer advised:

- The term 'people of colour' used in the Glossary under the BME/BAME glossary item should have been in quotation marks. It currently reads as though this is a term being used, but rather this should be a term whose usage is being referred to. It should be included within quotation marks to identify this as such. An explanation could be extended to highlight negative connotations with the term and that it is not universally accepted.
- The Glossary could be added to or changed if new terms become appropriate.
- There should be a definition of the term 'people of colour' included and this should detail that some people, as with the term 'BME or BAME', find the use of this term objectionable or offensive.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby proposed and Councillor Claire Strong seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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The reports and papers associated with this item can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 6th December, 2022, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)