



City of Westminster

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Councillor Aicha Less, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection
<b>Date:</b>	15/08/2022
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Refreshed Equality Objectives
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<p>The Council is subject to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires the Council to have an up to date set of specific and measurable Equality Objectives.</p> <p>The Council has developed policies around internal equalities in relation to inclusion within the organisation and staff recruitment. In this document the Council also commits to developing a wider strategy around advancing equalities for our communities as part of the development of the new communities' directorate.</p>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	Any financial implications will be met within existing budgets and resources.
<b>Report of:</b>	Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change.

## 1. Executive Summary

The purpose of the report is to agree the refreshed equality objectives for Westminster City Council to cover the period until 2024.

## 2. Recommendations

For the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection to agree four Equality Objectives for Westminster City Council until 2024 as set out below:

- **Staff will represent the demographic of our communities at all levels of the organisation.**
- **Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape all that we do across the Council.**
- **Support Westminster's communities to be sustainable, socially inclusive and empowered to act, when they are best placed to do so.**
- **Demonstrate inclusive leadership, strategic partnership and a clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the city.**

## 3. Reasons for Decision

The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires us to publish equality objectives every four years. These objectives replace the previous objectives 2016-2020.

## 4. Background, including Policy Context

### 4.1 Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 outlines the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Duty is a statutory duty and requires all public sector organisations, like Westminster City Council, to have embedded actions to progress equality across its policies and services.

Under this Duty, the Council must, in exercising our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

Equality Objectives should help the City Council to focus on key area to improve outcomes for communities.

We have selected four objectives that focus on areas where the Council has an impact due to its activities, and that we can meaningfully report on.

These are:

- Our Staff and Leadership
- Our Services
- Our communities
- Tackling inequality

#### **4. 2. Our Staff and Leadership**

Westminster City Council values the diversity of its staff to be able to deliver inclusive services that meet the needs of our diverse community, which includes our residents, businesses, and students.

##### **Objective**

**Staff will better represent the demographic of our communities at all levels of the organisation.**

It is important that at all levels our organisation reflects the communities we serve. Significant work has already taken place to increase the number of Westminster residents who work at the Council, to increase representation at senior levels within the organisation, and to embed inclusion across all our services. We know there is more work to do to ensure we have a diverse and inclusive workforce.

To measure our progress, we will continue our work to reduce our ethnicity, disability and gender pay gaps, and the number of women and people from a Black, Asian or other multiple ethnic (B.A.ME) backgrounds in senior management roles. We will also measure the characteristics of our staff against the local population.

As well as measuring our staff, we will also measure these characteristics for our elected Members. While we recognise Members are selected through a political process and cannot be impacted through the work of the Council, the Council have decided to publish this data. We have seen with our ethnicity and gender pay gap data, that having specific measurable data can focus priorities to improve equalities and putting this in the public domain creates an incentive for continual improvement.

##### **What we will do**

We will work towards having a workforce that reflects the diverse communities that we serve. We will do this through the work of our People Services team to increase the diversity of our workforce. In order to develop a more diverse workforce we will continue to focus on two areas, promotion to senior roles within the organisation, and recruitment of new staff to the organisation. Our recruitment processes will continue to include.

- Positive Action
- Diverse Panels
- Inclusive recruitment training
- Becoming a London Living Wage Employer

We need to ensure that all teams understand the benefits of inclusion both in the recruitment process and creating welcoming teams. We will do this by ensuring accountability from our leaders, and through relevant training programmes and support to ensure that everyone is engaging in the diversity and inclusion agenda, supporting our workforce, supporting our staff networks and by supporting our diversity and inclusion champions in each service, who lead on service related changes.

#### **What we will measure**

Our ethnicity, disability and gender pay gaps, and the number of staff with disabilities, women and Black, Asian and multiple ethnic staff, and LGBTQ+ staff in our senior management teams.

### **4.3 Our Services**

Our services need to be easy to access for all residents. It is important to ensure that our services are accessible to everyone who needs to use them whether it is a universal service provided to everyone (such as waste collection), a service that people can choose to use (such as leisure services) or a legal requirement where people do not have a choice (such as enforcement).

#### **Objective**

**Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape all that we do across the Council.**

#### **What we will do**

Collate data on who is accessing our services across all of our service areas, and develop performance requirements that help to drive improvements where they are needed.

#### **What we will measure**

Through the development of performance metrics we will measure how easily residents are able to access Council services and report on relevant actions for improvement based on the type of service.

### **4.4 Our Communities**

Our communities are our biggest asset, they are full of people with knowledge, skills, kindness and enthusiasm to help each other. We have seen the power of the community response to those in need through Covid, and with the cost-of-living crisis and the role of voluntary and community sector organisations and individuals in creating stronger communities. Programmes like the 'community champions' are well received because they have a wide range of community individuals who volunteer and can respond to the complex and diverse needs of the local community.

#### **Objective**

**We will support all of our communities to be sustainable, socially inclusive and empowered to act, when they are best placed to do so.**

### **What we will do**

- Support our voluntary and community sector to deliver on a range of priorities through our Community Investment Strategy.
- Develop community funding programmes that enable local people to act on things that are important to them
- Build capacity in communities so they have the skills and knowledge they need.
- Support events, activities, and organisations to bring people together across communities and ages, to build relationships.

### **What we will measure**

Deliver our Community Investment Strategy to enable local communities to deliver their priorities.

## **4.5 Tackling Inequalities**

We need to do more to involve our communities in developing strategic objectives that will deliver improved outcomes. It is important that together we tackle the very real issues communities are facing now around the cost of living, and the impact of poverty on the future opportunities of children and families.

### **Objective**

**Demonstrate inclusive leadership, strategic partnership and a clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the city.**

### **What we will do**

Consult and co-produce an overarching external Equalities Strategy approach that will embed equalities in all of the work that we do with communities.

We will also develop our approach to Equality Impact Assessments and our approach to implementing the socio-economic duty.

### **What we will measure**

Development of a strategy around external equalities and equality impact assessments.

### **Next Step**

These objectives will be published on the City Council website and reporting mechanisms will be put in place. The Communities Directorate will be responsible for ensuring these objectives are monitored and delivered by the relevant sections of the Council. Regular updates will be brought to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection.

## **5. Financial Implications**

The various workstreams to be undertaken by teams in Innovation and Change (Strategy and Intelligence & Communities) and People Services (Diversity & Inclusion) will be met from within existing staff and non-pay budgets.

## **6. Legal Implications**

### **6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 states: -**

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 The Council should also consider the March 2022 Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance entitled 'The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: England.' It states that the Council must publish one or more equality objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve the further the aims of the general equality duty. This is required to be done by 30 March 2018 and then at least every four years thereafter. The objectives must be specific and measurable. The objectives must also be published in a way that is accessible to the public, as a separate document, or in another document.

6.3 Regulations 5 and 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 provides the statutory framework for the Council to prepare and publish the equality objectives in order to achieve the outcomes of the Equality Act 2010 as noted in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

## **7. Carbon Impact**

The decisions in this report are policy decisions and do not relate to activity that could increase or reduce carbon.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

The proposals in this paper directly relate to how the Council can advance equality and diversity.

## **9. Consultation**

In developing these proposals discussions have taken place with;

- Community organisations and Council services, including those representing residents with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act, to develop the community proposals.
- Discussions around access to services have taken place with diversity and inclusion leads from services.
- Development of proposals around staff have taken place with our staff networks representing staff members with protected characteristics and builds upon the City Council's Inclusion Strategy which has been developed in conjunction with staff from across the organisation.

**If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact:**

**Shama Sutar-Smith, Communities Directorate, Innovation and Change**  
[sssmith@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:sssmith@westminster.gov.uk)

*NB: For individual Cabinet Member reports only*

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: Acha Less Date: 17 August 2022

NAME: Councillor Aicha Less

State nature of interest if any:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(N.B: If you have an interest, you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **'Refreshed Equalities Objectives'** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.



## **Appendix A**

### **Other Implications**

- 1. Resources Implications**
- 2. Business Plan Implications**
- 3. Risk Management Implications**
- 4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications**
- 5. Crime and Disorder Implications**
- 6. Impact on the Environment**
- 7. Equalities Implications – See section 8**
- 8. Staffing Implications**
- 9. Human Rights Implications**
- 10. Energy Measure Implications**
- 11. Communications Implications**
- 12. Counter Terrorism and Security Implications**

Note to report authors: If there are particularly significant implications in any of the above categories these should be