

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 8 JUNE 2021

EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2021 AND EQUALITY OUTCOMES (2021-23)

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF HR, DIGITAL ENABLEMENT, IT & BUSINESS SUPPORT

ABSTRACT

This report presents an Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2021 and Equality Outcomes (2021-23) as required by legislation.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) adopts the Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2021-23
- (ii) notes the Equality Outcomes (2021-23) and Progress Update of those from 2019 – 2021 as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes to the outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Council Plan, which focus on Economy, People, Place and Our Council. The particular emphasis of this report is on People and the council's priority to maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities.

3. BACKGROUND

The **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012** came into force in May 2012. These specific duties are designed to help public authorities in their performance of the general equality duty for public bodies to, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 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 those who do not share it.

The key legal requirements for the council contained in these specific duties are to:

- Report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty.
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress.
- Assess and review policies and practices.
- Gather and use employee monitoring information.
- Publish gender pay gap information.
- Publish statements on equal pay.
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.
- Publish equality information in a manner which is accessible.

There is a requirement for public bodies to publish an equality mainstreaming report and progress made with their equality outcomes in 2021 and subsequently every two years. However, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is currently reviewing this process, and the timeframe, as well as potential future requirements. The mainstreaming report must include employee equality monitoring information broken down by the protected

characteristics, such as age, disability, race etc. (where available), and the organisation's current gender pay gap. Although not a statutory requirement, we have also included our race and disability pay gaps as a matter of best practice.

In April 2018, the final part of the Equality Act (2010) (i.e. Part 1) was enacted, and this relates to the Fairer Scotland Duty (socio-economic duty). This Duty has a three year implementation period but public bodies have been required from April 2018 to pay due regard to, and assess, any socio-economic impact when making strategic decisions, in a similar way to assessing for any equality impact on one or more protected characteristic groups. Reference to this Duty is also made within the mainstreaming report.

4. CURRENT POSITION

MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY AND EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Mainstreaming equality means integrating equality into the day-to-day working of the council. This means taking equality into account in the way we exercise our functions i.e. equality must be a component of everything we do as a service provider and as an employer. The mainstreaming report details how we will meet the general and specific equality duties, presents an overview of the council's work on equality, and evidence of the progress achieved.

Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission states that the specific duties are intended to operate in conjunction with a public authority's existing corporate systems and frameworks for business planning and public performance reporting. It is intended to improve outcomes for those who experience discrimination and disadvantage. Many of the equality outcomes contained in the report are therefore aligned to the Council Plan and Community Plan but include some additional equality perspectives. Reporting structures are in place for these, and some of these are used to inform the mainstreaming report and provide a progress update on the equality outcomes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many pre-existing inequalities, such as in respect of low income, health, education, unemployment and life chances, safety and social care and wellbeing, amongst others. Consequently, it is more important than ever to take cognisance of equality and Fairer Scotland Duty issues.

We welcome this opportunity to highlight our progress with our equality outcomes in this report, continuing to build on the equality work we have already undertaken, and reinforcing our aim to: 'to integrate equality throughout the organisation and the services that we provide' through mainstreaming equalities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Failure to produce an equalities' mainstreaming report and publish progress made with our equality outcomes will result in a breach of the legislation.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2021

Equality Outcomes (2021-23)

Employee Equalities Monitoring Information 2021

Equality Impact Assessment