

Report

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	29 March 2023
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Community and Enterprise Resources
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Equal Opportunities Forum of the strategic and operational work being undertaken and planned by Community and Enterprise Resources to meet the commitments within the “Mainstreaming equalities progress report 2019 to 2021 and Mainstreaming equalities report 2021 to 2025”

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the work being undertaken by Community and Enterprise Resources in terms of mainstreaming equalities, be noted.

3. Background

3.1. In April 2021, the Council published its “Mainstreaming equalities report 2021 to 2025”. There are 5 Equality Outcomes set for 2021 to 2025 with a focus on actions to produce results intended to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people’s life chances. The 5 outcomes are:-

- ◆ Equality Outcome 1: Increase the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds employed in the South Lanarkshire Council workforce to reflect the diversity of the South Lanarkshire population
- ◆ Equality Outcome 2: Older people, those from vulnerable groups and individuals who live alone are protected from scams and nuisance calls and their wellbeing is improved through increased awareness and preventative action
- ◆ Equality Outcome 3: ‘Counselling through schools’ service is accessible for all children/young people aged 10 and over
- ◆ Equality Outcome 4: Prevent homelessness occurring and significantly reduce homelessness
- ◆ Equality Outcome 5: Increase the number of affordable homes for rent

Community and Enterprise Resources lead on Equality Outcome 2. This outcome is being progressed by Environmental Services Consumer and Trading Standards Services and quarterly updates are provided to the Corporate Equality and Diversity lead officer. Progress is noted in Appendix 1 items 8 and 9.

3.2. Community and Enterprise Resources continues to build on progress and remains committed to embedding equalities across all aspects of service provision. Resource equality activity is aligned and reported against the following 6 Council plan 'Connect' outcomes:-

- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Our children and young people thrive
- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ◆ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centre

Progress of activity along with the differences each activity has made is detailed in Appendix 1.

3.3. The Resource has an in-house Equal Opportunities Working Group which includes officers from each Service. It is the responsibility of service representatives to promote and co-ordinate equality and diversity activities within their services. The Chair of the Resource group attends the Corporate Equality and Diversity Working Group.

3.4. The Resource monitors all complaints regarding discrimination and ensures measures are taken to resolve any issues. These are reported through the Council's complaints procedure and any equality issues are reported to The Resource Management team as part of the quarterly monitoring process. No equality complaints were received during 2021/2022.

4. Equalities Impact Assessments

4.1. Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) assess the impact of new or revised policies practices or services against the requirements of the public sector equalities duty and help ensure the needs of service users are taken into account during their development and implementation.

4.2. During 2022, the Resource completed 2 EQIAs in relation to:-

- ◆ Sustainable Development Climate Change Strategy
- ◆ Social Enterprise Strategy

4.3. The Resource follows corporate guidance for carrying out EQIAs. Training for new users of the EQIA system is being arranged and refresher training is also being provided as requested by Services.

5. Comfort Scheme Pilot

5.1. As part of the budget savings process for 2014/2015 the decision was taken to close all public conveniences. At that time, 2 EQIAs were completed and approved in relation to these closures. A further 2 EQIAs were approved in 2015 and subsequently all the Council's 21 public convenience were closed to the public.

5.2. Following these closures, a Comfort (community toilet) Scheme pilot was launched in line with the Business Improvement District (BID) for Lanark. The Comfort Scheme enabled local authorities to work in partnership with local businesses to provide access for the public to clean, safe and accessible toilets in local business premises with a small annual fee provided. Three local businesses were identified as suitable

and the pilot commenced in July 2019. Initially intended to be a one year pilot, this was extended to September 2022 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 5.3. The evaluation of the pilot highlighted high administrative costs for the Council and challenges in determining usage of the scheme. For these reasons it was decided not to continue with the scheme. It was recommended that discussions be progressed with Lanark Business Improvement District on the potential continuation of the scheme under their management and operation. This was reported at the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee 13 December 2022. Following the Committee decision, Lanark Business Improvement District (Discover Lanark) advised they would discuss this at a future board meeting to consider any further options that may be available.

6. Open Space Strategy (OSS)

- 6.1. Preparation of an Open Space Strategy (OSS) and audit is one of the requirements of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. However, detailed regulations and guidance are awaited from Scottish Government. The Act specifically requires equality of access to open space to be assessed and also requires significant public engagement to be undertaken, including specific engagement with groups protected under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 6.2. The Planning Service and Countryside and Greenspace Service are due to complete the first stage of this process, which involved identifying the open space provision in South Lanarkshire and assessing relevant sites in terms of quality and accessibility, in March 2023.
- 6.3. Pilot community engagement meetings have taken place with community groups in Larkhall and Carluke to gain an understanding of what the key open space issues in their areas are, and to look at ways to involve the wider local communities in the OSS process. A full programme of community engagement across South Lanarkshire will be undertaken on the audit and strategy.
- 6.4. The preparation of the OSS is a significant project which will have major resource implications for the Council both in terms of staff time and expertise. It is, therefore, proposed that consultants be appointed to undertake elements of the work required, and funding from the Council's Climate Change fund has been secured to take this forward in order to meet the deadline March 2024.

7. Employment and Training

7.1. Recruitment

- 7.1.1. During 2022, Community and Enterprise Resources received a total of 3471 applications. From these applications, 493 posts were filled following the Council's standards on recruitment and selection.
- 7.1.2. Of the 29 candidates who declared a disability, all were interviewed, ten were offered a post and one was appointed. Of the 72 candidates from an ethnic background, all were interviewed and 17 were offered a post and appointed.

7.2. Training and Development

- 7.2.1. The Resource will continue to ensure employees understand that equal opportunities is a core competence against which they are measured. Within the Council's induction framework, line managers are required to explain conditions of service and processes to new employees, which includes equal opportunities. Learn on Line modules identified as mandatory training for all employees have been added to

Service training matrices and completion of these courses is being monitored by the Community and Enterprise Learning and Development Board.

7.3. Supporting Employees

7.3.1. Community and Enterprise Resources continues its commitment to ensuring employees have the necessary support to allow them to undertake their duties and is proactive in promoting the health and wellbeing of employees.

7.3.2. The Resource supports employees who are unable to undertake their full range of duties by making adjustments to their role and thereby allowing a return to work. These can range from amended duties to the provision of adaptive equipment, e.g. an adapted keyboard, mouse or chair.

8. Access to information

8.1. The Resource publishes Service information on the Council website which complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines legislation which came into force on 23 September 2020. ReciteMe was launched onto the Council's website in October 2022. ReciteMe provides accessibility and language options to enable everyone to customise the Council's website in a way that works for them including changing the front size/type, background colour or change the language. The Resource has a commitment to translate documents and provide interpretation services when appropriate.

9. Consultation, Involvement and Engagement

9.1. The Resource continues to work closely with a range of equalities groups and stakeholders. These include:-

- ◆ Access Panel
- ◆ Seniors Together
- ◆ Youth Council
- ◆ Various Community Councils/Groups and Development Trusts
- ◆ Wooddean Community Project Organisation
- ◆ Healthnhappy Springhall
- ◆ Strathaven Rotary Club Libberton and Tinto Primary Schools
- ◆ Victoria Park, Cairns, Heatheryknow and Calderwood Primary Schools

These groups and stakeholders were instrumental in shaping development of key, strategic pieces of work. Recent examples are consultation on the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan and the Topgolf driving range, a commercial leisure development application in Cambuslang where, during pre-application discussions the Access Panel made a number of suggestions to improve disabled access within the building.

10. Next steps and priorities

10.1. During the next year, the Resource will:-

- ◆ continue to promote and facilitate equality in all areas of service delivery
- ◆ ensure effective input to the Corporate Equality Outcomes
- ◆ continue to implement the process of equality impact assessment across all new and revised policy areas
- ◆ continue its commitment to staff training and development in relation to equality and diversity related issues

- ♦ continue the project management and delivery of projects assisting in providing improved facilities for disabled people and ensuring compliance with Equality Act legislation

11. Employee Implications

- 11.1. Mainstreaming equalities are met from within existing employee resources.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 13.1. There are no climate change or environmental implications as a result of this report.

14. Other Implications

- 14.1. There is a risk to the Council if the Resource does not comply with the relevant equalities duty and legislation

15. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 15.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy and, therefore, there is no requirement for an impact assessment to be carried out.

- 15.2. There was no requirement to undertake consultation in terms of the content of this report.

David Booth

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

14 March 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

Values

- ♦ Focused on people and their needs
- ♦ Working with and respecting others
- ♦ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ♦ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ♦ Fair, open and sustainable
- ♦ Excellent employer

Priorities

- ♦ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ♦ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ♦ We will work to recover, progress and improve

Outcomes

- ♦ Our children and young people thrive
- ♦ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ♦ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres
- ♦ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ♦ People live the healthiest lives possible

- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ◆ Equal Opportunities Forum – 15 September 2021

List of Background Papers

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Working For You: Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2019 to 2021 and Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021 to 2025

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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