

Report

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	15 September 2021
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 - 2021 and Mainstreaming equalities report 2021 to 2025”

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (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 progress report 2019 to 2021 and Mainstreaming equalities report 2021 to 2025”. The new Equality Outcomes set for 2021 to 2025 will focus on actions to produce results intended to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people’s life chances. Of the 5 outcomes identified, Community and Enterprise Resources will lead on 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.

This outcome will be progressed by Environmental Services Consumer and Trading Standards Services and further details are attached at Appendix 1.

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 7 Council plan ‘Connect’ objectives:-

- ◆ improve later life
- ◆ protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ improve the road network, influence improvements in public transport and encourage active travel

- ◆ support the local economy by providing the right conditions inclusive growth
- ◆ support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ work with communities and partners to promote high quality thriving and sustainable communities.

Progress of activity along with the differences each has made is detailed in Appendix 2.

- 3.3. In March 2020, Community and Enterprise Resources service delivery arrangements were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilience arrangements and controls were put in place across the Resource to manage the impacts of the pandemic and wherever possible continue service delivery. However, in some areas where physical distancing could not be achieved these services were either transformed or temporarily ceased. The equality initiatives impacted by COVID-19 across the Resource are indicated on Appendix 2. The Resource has had to respond to changing guidance to ensure that all safety measures are in place and that services continue to be delivered where possible. Alternative methods of service delivery have been explored and implemented during this time including the use of online technology. One of the positive impacts of COVID-19 has been more service users participating in active travel and accessing public greenspace such as Calderglen Country Park.
- 3.4. The Resource recognises the key role it has in delivering the Council's equality outcomes and the following actions are detailed in the resource plan:-
 - ◆ ensure there is adequate provision for the community to travel within South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ monitor the parking requirements for disabled users on an ongoing basis
 - ◆ ensure the transport provision reflects the needs of the community
 - ◆ help businesses within the community grow and develop
 - ◆ ensure inclusive design is adhered to when designing buildings in South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ ensure vulnerable groups are consulted regarding changes to buildings in their community
- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. 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. During 2020/2021 one complaint was received.
- 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 2020/2021, the Resource completed a total of 3 EQIAs in relation to:-

- ◆ The Planning and Building Standards Consultation, Communication and Engagement Strategy.
- ◆ The Food Growing Strategy.
- ◆ The Framework for the Procurement and Management of Vehicles.

An additional 9 EQIAs were completed for the 2021/2022 savings proposals.

4.3. The Resource follows corporate guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and those employees who have responsibility for preparing them receive refresher training.

5. Employment and Training

5.1. Recruitment

5.1.1. During 2020/2021, Community and Enterprise Resources received a total of 2918 applications. From these applications, 362 posts were filled following the Council's standards on recruitment and selection.

5.1.2. Of the 145 candidates who declared a disability, 8 were appointed and of the 86 candidates from an ethnic background, 4 were appointed.

5.2. Training and Development

5.2.1. 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.

5.3. Supporting Employees

5.3.1. 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.

5.3.2. 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, for example, an adapted keyboard, mouse or chair.

6. Access to information

6.1. 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. An exercise is ongoing to phase out pdf documents which can be difficult for screen readers. The Resource has a commitment to translate documents and provide interpretation services when appropriate.

7. Consultation, Involvement and Engagement

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

- ◆ Access Panel
- ◆ various Community Council Groups
- ◆ various local play park groups
- ◆ Bothwell Road Action Group

- ◆ Abington Parent School Partnership
- ◆ Lanark Playpark Action Group - LPAGS

These groups and stakeholders were instrumental in shaping development of key, strategic pieces of work. Recent examples are the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan and redevelopment of play parks/areas including sensory gardens at various locations across South Lanarkshire.

8. Next steps and priorities

8.1. 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.

9. Employee Implications

9.1. Mainstreaming equalities are met from within existing employee resources.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

11.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications associated with this report.

12. Other Implications

12.1. There is a risk to the Council if the Resource does not have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as this may lead to non-compliance with equalities legislation. The consequence of this could be an unlimited financial penalty.

12.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

13. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

13.1. 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.

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

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

31 August 2021

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Improve later life
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Improve the road network, influence improvements in public transport and encourage active travel
- ◆ Support the local economy by providing the right conditions inclusive growth
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality thriving and sustainable communities.

Previous References

Equal Opportunities Forum – 6 March 2019

List of Background Papers

South Lanarkshire Working for You: Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2017-2019
South Lanarkshire Working for You: Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2019-2021
and Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021-2025

Contact for Further Information

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

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