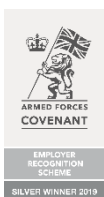


EQUALITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

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for Partnerships

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Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

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Foreword

As a Council, we have a duty to produce a Single Equality Scheme and this Strategy forms our Scheme for 2023-2027, guiding our approach to increasing opportunities across the District and improving access to Council services.

Tendring District Council's Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027 aims to ensure that equality is embedded into our policies, procedures and every-day working, and recognise that everyone has their own unique needs, characteristics, skills, and abilities.

The Strategy is the next step in a journey to better understand our communities and anticipate the needs of residents and service users. The Strategy identifies five key objectives and the actions we will take to deliver each of these. Progress will be monitored every year through our Annual Equality Report.

Ian Davidson, Chief Executive

Councillor Lynda McWilliams, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships

Context

The Tendring District is 33,740 hectares in size (approximately 130 square miles), has 60km of coastline and a population of 148,100 (2021).

The population of the district, according to the 2021 census figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is 148,100, an increase of 3,400 from 2017. The 2021 census has revealed that the population is 51.8% female and 48.2% male. 36.8% of the population is aged over 60 suggesting that a significant proportion of the population is unlikely to be economically active. 43.75% of the population (64,800) are aged between 20 and 59 being the ages in which people are most likely to be engaged in employment.

Further detailed information on the profile of the population and economy of the District is available on the Council's website [here](#). The information on the website will be updated to include the key demographic data from the 2021 census as it is released by the ONS between October 2022 and January 2023. The ONS has stated that it intends to release the following data during this period:

- demography and migration
- ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion
- UK armed forces veterans
- housing
- labour market and travel to work
- sexual orientation and gender identity
- education
- health, disability, and unpaid care

This data will be used to inform the organisation's strategies and priorities for delivery of its services and partnership working.

Our Equality Duties

The Equality Act 2010 introduced new duties on public bodies including local authorities, referred to as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). These consist of general and specific duties and replace former duties for race, gender and disability (a Single Equality Scheme).

The general duties require public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having “due regard” will require the Council to consciously think about the three general duties as part of its decision-making processes. In particular, how equality issues influence the way in which the Council acts as an employer; how it develops, evaluates and reviews policy; how it designs, delivers and evaluates services; and how it commissions and procures services from others.

Under the specific duties, the Council is required to complete the following actions:

1. Publish information annually which demonstrates how it complies with its general equality duties in relation to the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.
2. Adopt and publish measurable equality objectives and review them every four years.

We have three key roles in promoting equality and inclusion:

1. **As a community leader** - We work with our partners to tackle inequality
2. **As a provider of services** - Making sure our services are tailored to the needs of the individuals. Making sure staff are aware and responsive to the needs of different sections of our community.
3. **As an employer** - We aim to be an inclusive employer and have policies in place to make sure staff can balance their work and home commitments.

Our Objectives 2023-2027

Below are our equality objectives covering the period 2023-2027. These are based on our roles and responsibilities, the needs of the community, as well as being informed by the most up-to-date data about the district of Tendring, including 2021 Census data as it becomes available.

The objectives support the Council’s vision as set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-24, “to put community leadership at the heart of everything we do through delivery of high quality, affordable services and working positively with others” ..

The Council’s Values which underpin the Corporate Plan are:

- Councillors and staff uphold personal integrity, honesty and respect for others
- Innovative, flexible, professional staff committed to delivering excellence
- Recognising the diversity and equality of individuals
- Working Collaboratively with partners, including Supporting the Essex wide vision and ambitions

As shown below, we have set out a series of actions to help us deliver each objective.

Objective 1: Engage and communicate in appropriate and accessible ways

We know that good quality information leads to well-informed decisions, which in turn impact on the suitability and quality of services.

Actions we will take to deliver this objective:

1. Consult on and launch, a new Community Engagement Strategy. The focus of our approach will be about building relationships and the basis of our way of working is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) which will put people at its heart and be built on trust, inclusion and collaboration.
2. Provide advice and information in a way that is accessible and meets individual needs.
3. Engagement and consultation is accessible to enable people to participate in the decision making process.
4. Engage with local residents by increasing opportunities for individuals, including those seldom heard, and communities to participate and engage in our Council's services and projects.
5. Communicate updates to partners concerning and detailing current Council strategy and services to enable the provision of a reliable source to which partners can refer. As appropriate, this may be a revised notification to a relevant section within the Council's website for information.
6. Review and monitor the information on our website so that it meets the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018.
7. Pay due regard to the guidance provided by the Ombudsman on accessibility.
8. Ensure that the outcome of Equality Impact Assessments are summarised within the Council's decision making and available upon request, unless they contain exempt information to protect an individual's identity

Objective 2: Ensure we deliver inclusive and responsive services

Understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing services. The Council acknowledges the challenges of rural isolation, access to services and limited public transport.

Actions we will take to deliver this objective:

1. Ensuring that we undertake assessments of the potential impact of new and revised policies and proposed changes to service delivery. This will be carried out through the careful/responsible use of Equality Impact Assessments.
2. Be proactive in how we support our residents through community engagement, community safety initiatives, regulation and enforcement.
3. Build upon our reputation as a supportive partner for the safe resettlement of refugees through schemes such as that for Afghanistan and Ukraine.
4. Continue our work to digitise our customer contact options to increase ways in which the community can access our services and enquiry support.
5. By working with partner agencies, utilising housing adaptations grant options, sheltered housing and through the use of the Council's Careline service we will seek to provide reassurance, assistance and help to those in need to maintain dignity and independence in living within the community.
6. The Council will work to increase its housing stock to provide good quality affordable housing for those most in need in accordance with its allocations policy.
7. The Council will work to enable as many people as possible to live independently in their homes through the use of Better Care Funding to deliver disabled facilities adaptations and other initiatives.

8. Deliver further value for money for our tenants by carrying out a review of the condition of the housing stock, maintaining a 30 year HRA Business Plan.
9. Ensuring the Council's contractors acknowledge this Strategy in their tender submissions with statements on how they will adhere to its objectives.

Objective 3: Foster good relations with and within the community

We will continue to promote inclusion, fairness and accessibility, whilst raising the profile of Tendring as a great place to live, work, study and visit.

Actions we will take to deliver this objective:

1. The Council in its role as a community leader will set a positive example in relation to promoting tolerance and equality issues publicly and proactively. We will continue to mark and promote awareness of, Commonwealth Day, Veterans Day, Holocaust Memorial Day and Pride and other such commemorations that raise awareness and positively seek to break down barriers and increase mutual understanding.
2. The Council will play its part in challenging hate crime by facilitating reporting, supporting victims, and increasing the number of hate crime ambassadors within staff its staff.

Hate crime is defined as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.' This common definition was agreed in 2007 by the police, Crown Prosecution Service, Prison Service (now the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system.¹

3. The Council and its partners will continue to develop our understanding of the quality of relations between different communities and collectively monitor relations.
4. The Council will support and work collaboratively with partners in the development and use of community hubs to connect individuals to needed services and help build more cohesive and resilient communities
5. The Council will tackle disadvantage by implementing a levelling up programme that increases residents' pride in Tendring, improves residents' skills and supports local businesses.
6. To work with the Community and Voluntary sector, Faith Groups and others in recognition that we become a more inclusive society by working together to support the most vulnerable in our communities.
7. We will continue to work with partners to protect the vulnerable through targeted interventions around homelessness to those most in need.

Objective 4: Break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021>

At a local and national level there are areas of persistent inequality which remain a considerable challenge. We also know that poverty can be a significant factor in determining life chances and wellbeing. We will continue to focus on those in greatest need to ensure that people can access services and support that works for them.

Actions we will take to deliver this objective:

1. Maintain and constantly seek to increase the quality and range of the Council's housing stock, by regularly inspecting tenants' homes to ensure that they are maintained to the highest possible standards.
2. Develop a plan to improve the physical appearance and image of those areas of significant social and economic deprivation such as through the Jaywick Sands Place Plan to facilitate regeneration of the area to foster employment, improved health outcomes and housing.
3. Work collaboratively with partners and by utilising the Local Delivery Pilot, to reduce health inequalities across the district, to improve general levels of health and wellbeing by encouraging healthy and active lifestyles, prioritising early preventative interventions.
4. Work with partners to develop and implement suicide reduction and prevention strategies, and to provide ongoing mental health support via, for example the mental health hub and programmes within schools to target early intervention.
5. To work with partners and utilise the Tendring Community Fund to target support for local people and community groups throughout the District and to help to address the some of the worst impacts of the cost of living crisis.
6. Work to improve the energy performance of our council housing stock. Through partnership working in the private sector encourage an increase in take up of energy grants e.g. Green Homes Grant, ECO (Energy Company Obligation) and other renewable energy offers over the term of the plan to combat local fuel poverty.
7. Increase the supply and quality of new homes. We will continue our work to deliver our new Local Plan housing requirement of circa 550 new homes per annum, of which up to 30% on larger developments will be new affordable homes.
8. Raise the skills level and employability of people within the district through the Anchor Institutions network skills agenda and the Tendring Education Strategic Board. The Council will also actively continue to seek to provide more apprenticeship opportunities for the people of the District and beyond through its own Career Track apprenticeship provision and by encouraging local businesses to take on more apprenticeships.
9. The Council will use Employment and Skills Charters and local labour agreements on future major developments to create training and employment opportunities during the term of the development.
10. The Council will seek to increase opportunities for residents to access local jobs through its economic programmes, for example in the plans for Freeport East, Levelling Up Fund bids and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
11. Utilising the Community Safety Partnership and Health and Well-being Board to influence the wider determinants of health by working with partners around issues such as safety, employment, opportunity and income.
12. The Council will review its Social Value Policy and Procurement Strategy to maximise opportunities.

Objective 5: Develop and Support Equality and Inclusion in the Workforce

We will continue to promote inclusion, fairness and accessibility in our work place. A representative workforce will help us deliver services that are accessible, appropriate and that help reduce inequalities.

Actions we will take to deliver this objective:

1. Regularly monitor, analyse and publish employment data in accordance with our statutory duties. We will publish employee profile data within our annual Equalities report.
2. Encourage employees to declare their protected characteristics. Having such records enables the organisation to monitor the makeup of its staffing complement to see if it reflects that of the community and how it might become an employer of choice for groups that may be marginalised. It also enables the organisation to ensure that it has in place any measures needed to make reasonable adjustments and that its employees are not at risk of victimisation, bullying or harassment.
3. In addition, keeping records of staff gender are required for reporting on the Gender Pay Gap. It is also expected that large organisations will soon be required to report on their Ethnicity Pay Gap.
4. Continue to produce and update a five year People Strategy, in alignment with our Corporate Plan and Equality and Inclusion Strategy, which sets out how we will seek to support and develop all of our employees throughout the time of their employment with TDC.
5. Seek to maintain and build upon our accreditation as a Disability Confident Leader and as an accredited Gold Award holder in the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. In addition, the organisation will seek to support a suitable successor to the Time to Change Employer Pledge which was achieved in 2019.
6. Assess the effects of all employment procedures and take action to mitigate any adverse impact identified and to promote equality of opportunity.
7. Recruit, develop and retain local talent where the Council can in a competitive labour market.
8. Develop our staff via our policies and training commitments. Promote apprenticeship opportunities to existing staff and externally.
9. Hold regular development conversations with staff, to help ensure all staff have equal opportunities for learning, training and professional development.
10. Champion equality and inclusion in the workplace in the development of HR policies and procedures.
11. Work collaboratively with other local authorities and public sector partners via the Essex Equality Network to identify and share best practice.
12. Deliver annual training and development opportunities to Members through their Code of Conduct, the induction programme (post elections in 2023) and specific equality and inclusion sessions.