

# Sedgemoor District Council

## Action Plan for 2015 to 2016

Our district, our communities, our customers

## Introduction

The introduction of the Equality Act 2010 has lessened the burden on the Council to produce a Corporate Equality scheme every three years as the previous legislation required. However the Council has a number of legal obligations under the Act and therefore an approach is needed that clearly sets out our commitment to Equality and Diversity and makes it clear how we will meet our obligations. The Action Plan for 2013-2014 sets out our commitment to promoting Equality and Diversity among staff, the community and in delivery of our services. It aims to explain how we will successfully incorporate Equality and Diversity into the core of our activities and thus fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### What is Equality and Diversity?

Equality - is about giving everyone an equal chance to fulfil their potential. It means providing equality of opportunity, equal access to services and fair and proportional treatment

Diversity – is about difference. Everyone is an individual with differences that can be visible and non visible. By respecting the diversity of individuals, they can feel valued for their contribution as an individual and to the community.

### What do we want to achieve

The Council's Corporate Priorities are:



By moving to the approach set out in this report the Council will achieve:

- Delivery of targeted services, policies and resources to provide fairer outcomes
- Improve customer satisfaction through understanding and recognising the differing needs of a range of service users
- More efficient, effective and value for money services
- More informed and improved decision making

### **The Action Plan**

The Council have brought together a separate paper on Equality Information 2014 and that sets out in a concise form an array of data and information that has been used to set the Council's Equality Objectives. The actions are required to continue to deliver the objectives have been supplemented by actions needed to achieve the 'achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

### **Monitoring and review**

The council will:

- Produce quarterly update reports to Group Managers and Management Team, setting out
  - Progress against our agreed actions
  - Work undertaken in the previous quarter, continuing to build on the equality information we already
  - Identification of regional and nationally significant reports, data or information that we should take note of and where necessary action
- Work with our Members through the Equalities Working Group to keep them informed on progress, and report back regularly to the Audit and Governance Committee and the Scrutiny committees
- Work with our staff through the Staff Forum to monitor progress against actions that are specific to the staff of the Council

## The Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 was given Royal Assent in April 2010 and since that time there have been a number of legislative changes affecting the council both as an employer and as provider of services.

April 2011 was particularly notable as this date saw the implementation of The Public Sector Equality Duty which replaced the three separate duties which related to Disability, Race and Gender Equality with one single Duty specifically covering the areas of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The duty will require all public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means –
  - a. Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
  - b. Taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
  - c. Encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means –
  - a. Tackling prejudice
  - b. Promoting understanding

The Equality Duty is supported by Specific Duties which came into force in September 2011. The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant proportionate information to

demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty and to set specific, measurable equality objectives.

Supporting actions

**Equality Objective 1:**

**Develop as an organisation that is committed to equalities to achieve visible equality outcomes for our customers and staff through learning, improvement and strong intelligence**

What do we want to achieve?

A public commitment to Equality and Diversity that is understood by our staff, our customers and our partners, resulting in better understanding of our customers and residents resulting in better outcomes and opportunities for all

Why?

Sedgemoor moves from a position where staff, customers and partners are unclear about what Sedgemoor is doing on Equality and Diversity to one where everyone is fully engaged and working to achieve the commitment made

Ref	Action	Outcome – performance measurement		Responsible officer	Target date
					15/16
1.1	Update quarterly the Equality and Diversity section of the website	Accessible information to all communities in Somerset	Number of hits each quarter overall and per page	Equality and Risk Manager (ERM)	1.7.15 1.10.15 1.1.16 1.4.16
1.2	Communication 1.4.1 – Produce a quarterly update on progress in delivering the actions	Greater openness against our objectives and the feedback received	Number of reports produced	ERM	1.7.15 1.10.15 1.1.16 1.4.16
1.3	Work with the Procurement Manager to review how equalities can be more integrated into the current process and update the Procurement	Improve quality of services delivered by external	Updated process and strategy	ERM and Procurement team	30.7.15

	Strategy	providers			
1.4	Work with the disabled community of Sedgemoor through the Disability forum, delivering 2 forums a year covering broad range of topics	Supportive environment in which to raise and receive support for issues being faced	Number of attendees	ERM	31.5.2015 31.10.2015
1.5	Develop a specific forum for people with Learning Disabilities, delivering at least one forum a year	Supportive environment tailored to the needs of the attendees	Number of attendees	ERM	30.6.15
1.6	Work Bridgwater Senior Citizens Forum through the Sedgemoor Older Person's forum, delivering 3 forums a year covering a broad range of topics	Supportive environment in which to raise and receive support for issues being faced	Number of attendees	ERM	30.6.15 31.10.15 28.2.16
1.7	Develop linkages with the migrant communities of Sedgemoor through the development of language classes	Deliver support to the community and develop links to provide supportive environment for these communities as the demographics of the district change	Number of attendees	ERM	30.9.15
1.8	Develop links with local carer groups within	Develop an	Number of group	ERM	31.3.15

	Sedgemoor area to develop an understanding of the issues, concerns and practical help that the group can give	understanding of the issues the group are facing and what practical things that can be done to help	meetings attended		
1.11	Maintain the Staff Forum, holding quarterly meetings and produce an annual report for Management Team	Focused engagement with staff	Number attending per meeting	ERM/HR	30.6.15 30.9.15 31.12.15 31.3.16
1.12	Develop case studies on the work that the Council has done in order to demonstrate how we are delivering against our general duties	Examples of the work the council does and how the communities have benefited	4 case studies produced	ERM	30.9.15
1.13	Undertake a self-assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government, identifying areas where further work would benefit the council	Overview of the council's performance e	Number of indicators where developing standards has been met	ERM	30.6.15
1.14	Maintain the partnership arrangements with the Somerset Intelligence Network	Access to wide range of data and statistics		ERM	31.3.16
1.15	Maintain the Sedgemoor Data Group, identifying pieces of work that can be done at local level or with the support of the partnership	Better understanding of what data the	Number of meetings per year	ERM	30.9.14 31.3.15

		council holds			
1.16	Develop the section on the Intranet to hold to become a data depository for all data and statistics that the Council has and collects. Add details of all engagement and consultation work undertaken to develop a reference store for all staff to use	Transparency in the information held by the council	Number of hits on the Intranet site	ERM	31.10.15

### Equality Objective 2:

**Work with partners at local level, county level, with other public sector organizations and with the voluntary and sector to drive improved equality outcomes for our communities and residents**

What do we want to achieve?

An equal partnership with our neighbouring councils, other public sector partners and the voluntary sector

Why?

Working with partners across the public sector and the voluntary sector will allow us to pool our resources and information and recognize common areas where we can work together to support our particular communities

Ref	Action	Outcome – Performance Measure		Responsible Officer	Target date
					2014/15
2.1	Work with colleagues through Somerset Equality Officers Group (SEOG) to develop a county wide Equal Opportunities Policy	Equality for all	Policy agreed	ERM/SEOG	31.12.15
2.4	Hate Crime	Support to	Number of	ERM/SEOG	31.3.16

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with new provider of support services to support the delivery of their service across the County</li> <li>2. Work with them to continue the deliver the third party reporting centre project</li> </ol>	victims in hate crime	people supported		
2.5	<p>Deaf Community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with the Bridgwater and Taunton Deaf Club twice a year – June and November</li> <li>2. Raise awareness of issues affecting Deaf customers across the Council and with a wider audience to include CAB and school establishments</li> </ol>	Recognition of this particular community and the issues they face	Number of meeting attended	ERM/SEOG	31.3.15
2.6	Work with colleagues from a variety of organisations to develop an approach to Digital Inclusion for the county of Somerset, seeking a mandate from the Public Sector Chief Executive's group to deliver this piece of work	Reduce inequalities	Agreement produced	ERM/Digital Inclusion group	31.3.16
2.7	Work with colleagues to develop a Multi Faith Forum for Somerset including the development and agreement to a Somerset Faith Covenant	Better understanding of the work of the faith community	Agreement produced	ERM/SEOG/ Faith and Belief forum	31.12.15
2.8	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community:	Greater understanding of		ERM/SEOG	31.3.16

	<p>1. Work with Somerset Lesbian Network to encourage feedback on the issues that are being raised at monthly drop-ins</p> <p>2. Using research commissioned from the Diversity Trust , develop a county wide action plan to support the Gay community of Somerset</p>	the issues faced	<p>Feedback received</p> <p>Action planned developed</p>		
2.9	Develop and agree an action plan to support the Gypsy and Travelling community, getting sign off for the work from the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board	Update issues recognised	Number of actions identified	ERM	30.6.15
2.10	Work with Members to maintain the Equalities Working Group	Greater understanding of the Equality agenda as well as better understanding of issues affecting particular groups	Number of meetings held a year	ERM	31.7.15 31.10.15 31.1.16
2.11	Work with the Somerset Association of Local Councils to raise awareness of equalities, looking at specific issues parish councils may come across	Better working understanding of equalities at local level	Presentations to be done	ERM/SEOG	31.12.15
2.12	<p>Communication:</p> <p>1. Produce a quarterly newsletter for SEOG as a way of promoting and updating what is going on</p>	Greater communication to a wide	Number of newsletter produced	ERM/SEOG	31.3.16

	across the County and the work of the group 2. Maintain a list of all organisations in Somerset in order to build a better picture of the voluntary and community sector across the County.	audience	Number of organisations on central list held		
2.13	Work with Clinical Commissioning Group to identify opportunities to work together with particular communities, producing a joint agreement for each piece of work	Reduced duplication and greater efficiency	Number of pieces of work undertaken	ERM	31.3.16
2.14	Work with Somerset Sight to understand the issues and concerns that members of Blind and partially sighted community face is dealing with the council  Identify what practical things can be done to resolve the issues and concerns raised	Better understanding of the needs of this particular community	Number of actions delivered	ERM/SEOG	31.12.15