

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officers – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; People & Technology****Corporate Services Committee: 19 May 2021**

Subject: Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025**1 Purpose****1.1 The purpose of this report is:**

- To present the draft Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025 for approval.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended the Committee approves the report and the equality outcomes and mainstreaming priorities it identifies.

3 Background

3.1 Since 2013 the Scottish Government has required public bodies to develop and publish a set of Equality Outcomes which support delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The law requires that all public bodies under this duty publish a set of Equality Outcomes at least every 4 years.

3.2 As in previous years, to ensure compliance, the draft report is scheduled to be published by 30 April 2021 and the content confirmed formally at the Corporate Services Committee on 19 May 2021.

3.3 Delivery of the outcomes and supporting activity will be managed through the service plans in each area, and the overall position and progress monitored through the Equality & Diversity Working Group (EDWG), which is remitted to develop, agree and progress the Corporate Equalities Strategy.

3.4 Council services have been fully involved in the development of the report, and have provided advice and evidence of progress in emerging action areas. Following approval of outcomes, a revised Equalities Scorecard with identified Actions and Performance Indicators will be created in 2021/22. Services are already considering indicative Actions and Indicators, which integrate with existing activities. These will be formally approved at the EDWG.

3.5 The Scottish Government and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have acknowledged the level and type of consultation Local Authorities have been able to undertake has been affected by Covid-19 and resulting restrictions. However, digital consultation has been held through the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum, a partnership group involving community organisations with a focus on equalities, to identify evidence of

progress and priorities for future years. In addition, the document has been informed by drawing on past consultations and national evidence sources.

- 3.6** Local Authorities are able to alter Equality Outcomes during the four-year life of reports -although this has rarely happened in the last two four-year periods. The Scottish Government has acknowledged that circumstances around the pandemic may mean priorities change as impacts become clearer.
- 3.7** As public bodies, Local Authorities, Education Authorities and Licensing Boards are all required to produce at least two Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports. The report is structured to reflect these requirements but also to demonstrate how, in practice, our work and agendas overlap.

4 Main Issues

- 4.1** The Scottish Government has clearly stated it considers Equality and Human Rights of even greater importance as a result of the pandemic. Evidence shows that disadvantaged groups, for example women, those with severe disabilities, and people from Black Minority Ethnic backgrounds are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. In addition, young adults, and families and children already in poverty may be more negatively affected.
- 4.2** The report details progress made on the 2017-2021 Equality Outcomes. The pandemic has brought some areas into sharper focus, for example the need for increased digital inclusion, but has made progress in other areas, such as education, more difficult to measure.
- 4.3** During the first two years of the plan positive progress was made across all areas. Progress across 2019-2021 was more mixed largely because of the impacts of the pandemic, though there were notable advances in increasing the participation of under represented groups, for example via the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum (WDEF). At the same time there is recognition that there is more work to be done to deliver on the ambitions described in the 2017 report.
- 4.4** Reducing occupational segregation remains a challenge. That said positive partnership working is underway which focuses on the role of education and community in changing commonly held views on gender traditional roles. This work at an early stage in development has the most chance of meaningful impact.
- 4.5** In terms of mainstreaming equality, increasing digital inclusion will remain a priority. This links to wider work underway in the organisation around empowerment of our citizens and the commitments enshrined in the Council's Digital Strategy.
- 4.6** The revised set of Outcomes and Mainstreaming priorities for 2021-25 address the pressing issues noted above - covering employment diversity, occupation segregation, community empowerment, educational attainment,

involvement in Licensing processes and ensuring licensing contributes to safer communities.

5 People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications resulting directly from this report. Work to implement the plan will be carried out by the services themselves as part of regular activity.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no direct financial or procurement implications associated with this report.

7 Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Failure to have a coherent approach to equality supported by strong leadership would undermine the efforts to reduce inequalities and to 'build back better', and recover from the effects of the pandemic in West Dunbartonshire. The report details stretching but realistic, Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming objectives designed to meet these challenges, add value to other work, for example tackling child poverty, and ensure legal compliance.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** A detailed EIA has been carried out. It notes a range of potentially positive impacts for a range of protected groups, and no negative impacts were identified.

9 Consultation

- 9.1** All service areas have been involved in development of the report and participate in the EDWG. Protected groups have been involved through the WDEF in identifying areas of focus.

10 Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** Equality is a key underpinning principle in delivering the strategic vision and mission of the Council, and sustainable and inclusive COVID recovery.
- 10.2** It directly responds to the Strategic Priority to provide open, accountable & accessible local government in West Dunbartonshire.
- 10.3** The proposals benefit all the people of West Dunbartonshire, by supporting equality and fairness for all, through advancing the public sector equality duty, including eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between groups.

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Appendices: **Appendix 1:** Draft Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All wards