

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officers – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; People & Technology****Corporate Services Committee: 24 May 2023**

**Subject: Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming 2021-25: progress report
20212023****1 Purpose****1.1 The purpose of this report is:**

- To update on progress towards delivery of the Equality Outcomes for the organisation.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended the Committee notes progress to date in delivery of the Equality Outcomes.

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 28 April 2023 and the content confirmed formally at the Corporate Services Committee on 24 May 2023.

3.3 The Equality Outcomes (Appendix 1) adopted by Council in May 2021 cover key issues for the organisation, such as workforce diversity, and inequity of educational outcomes. The Equality & Diversity Working Group (EDWG) reviews progress on delivery of these outcomes and any areas of concern at each quarterly meeting, with a scorecard developed (Appendix 2) to inform discussion on both actions and performance indicators.

3.4 Delivery of the outcomes and supporting activity are managed through a range of measures such as service plans, corporate strategies and the EDWG. The overall position and progress monitored through the EDWG, which is remitted to develop, agree and progress the Corporate Equalities Strategy.

3.5 Council services have been fully involved in the development of the report, and have provided advice and evidence of progress in emerging action areas.

- 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 set of Outcomes and Mainstreaming priorities for 2021-25 address, employment diversity; occupation segregation; community empowerment; educational attainment; involvement in Licensing processes and ensuring licensing contributes to safer communities. It is important that focus is maintained in these areas.
- 4.3** Appendix 1, details progress made on the 2021-2025 Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming report. The pandemic has brought some areas into sharper focus, for example the need for increased digital inclusion, but has made progress in other areas.
- 4.4** During the first two years of the plan positive progress was made across all areas. There were advances in increasing the participation of under-represented groups, for example digitally via the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum (WDEF).
- 4.5** Reducing occupational segregation remains a challenge: 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 is evolving and is a key component of meaningful impact. Within the workplace, continuing investment in addressing the three main causes of occupational segregation including:
- Strong support of flexible working being applicable to ALL roles resulted in recognition among the awards for Top 10 Flexible Employers;
 - Support for carers' through dedicated paid and unpaid leave
 - Guaranteed interviews for parents returning to the workplace after a period of time out also help to retain these valuable employees.
- 4.6** In terms of mainstreaming equality, increasing digital inclusion and accessibility will remain a priority. This links to wider work underway in the

organisation around empowerment of our citizens and the commitments in the Council's Digital Strategy.

- 4.7** Appendix 2, details the progress to date on the actions and performance indicators within the four year scorecard.
- 4.8** Of the 27 actions to date, 14 have been completed and a further seven are in progress. The remaining six action are due to commence in the coming year and it is anticipated that all actions will be completed within the timeframe of the 2021-2025 Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming plan.
- 4.9** Of the 26 performance indicators set out in the plan, the latest data shows 14 have targets set, for the latest year data. Of these, 12 exceeded or met target, and 2 significantly missed target. A further 12 performance indicators are data only and are noted in appendix 2. The performance indicators that significantly missed target relate to the following:
- % of our workforce who have stated they are LGBT
 - % of our workforce who are from a Black minority ethnic group

For both these performance indicators, measuring performance is dependent upon self-declaration of protected characteristics, wide ranging work is underway via a further data verification exercise to increase disclosure of these protected characteristics by employees, and thus make the data more comprehensive.

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', address the cost of living crisis and tackle child poverty. The equalities perspectives add value to other work, and help meet the Public Sector Equality Duty supporting the Council's legal compliance.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** EIA 707: The update for 21-23 gives an opportunity to assess the potential impacts identified in 2021 detailed in EIA 294 against actually impacts. A positive impact from 2021-23, has been a more highly developed use of

Equality Impact Assessments, that has supported equality mainstreaming, decision and policy making. The equalities agenda has also demonstrably affected the shape of the new Council's Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2027.

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 for the 2021-25 report, and the forum meet regularly during 21-23. The results of Citizen's Panel and Strategic Plan Surveys carried out during 2022 showed that the core element of our approach to equalities underpin the priorities reported by respondents.

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: 2021-25 Equality Outcome monitoring progress report 2021-23 Appendix 2: 2021-2025 Scorecard Report 2021-23
Background Papers:	2021-2025 Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report
Wards Affected:	All wards