

# Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

## Equality Policy Statement and Objectives

January 2016

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## **Policy Statement**

We want to make sure that people have the opportunity to reach their potential and that our services meet their needs. We will achieve this through our roles as a community leader, service provider and employer. The commitments in this document apply to Councillors and staff and set standards for others who deliver services on our behalf.

### **As a Community Leader we will:**

- Manage the effects of reduced financial resources by taking informed decisions and being accountable for them;
- Encourage and support people to be active in community life and exercise their democratic rights; and
- Listen and respond to the views of our communities.

### **As a Service provider we will:**

- Help everyone to make use of the services to which they are entitled;
- Give information and advice in suitable ways; and
- Monitor and evaluate services to identify whether they are meeting people's needs.

### **As an employer we will:**

- Select, appoint and promote individuals only on the basis of merit;
- Encourage all staff to develop and reach their potential;
- Provide a safe and accessible workplace;
- Provide fair and open pay and reward systems; and
- Make sure staff treat each other with dignity and respect.

### **To deliver our commitments we will:**

- Update this document annually to set out what we have done against our objectives;
- Use equality impact assessments when making changes to our services; and
- Not tolerate inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour to staff or service users.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

- The Chief Executive will have overall responsibility for implementing this policy statement.
- Senior Managers will make sure their service areas comply with this document.
- Each member of staff has responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy statement and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Each Councillor has responsibility to read, understand and make sure their behaviour has regard for this policy statement.
- Implementation of this policy statement will be monitored by Management Team.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (the equality duty). The equality duty is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific

duties. The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

## **Equality information**

Under the Equality Act (2010) we are required to publish information to show how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This must include information relating to people, who share a protected characteristic, who are our employees and people affected by our policies and practices. We have provided information about our population below. Information about people that use our services is set out in the rationale for each of our equality objectives. Information about our employees is included in the annual update to our Human Resources Strategy.

### **Disability**

The 2011 Census recorded that 14,057 households (29.2%) in the Borough include people with a long-term health problem or disability. Of these 2,919 households (6.1%) include two or more persons with a long-term health problem or disability. 17,946 (14.9%) people in the Borough have their day to day activities limited a little or a lot by a long-term illness or disability. This is lower than the Kent average of 17.6% and lower than the national average of 17.9%.

### **Age**

Mid-year population estimates (2014) recorded the average age of the Borough's population as 40.3. This is slightly lower than the Kent average of 40.7 years but higher than the national average of 39.6 years. Currently, 18.5% of the Borough's population is aged over 65. Population forecasts indicate that 23.8% of the Borough's population will be aged over 65 by 2033. This is in line with population forecasts for the Kent area.

### **Sex (Gender)**

The 2011 Census recorded that 51% of the population is female and 49% is male.

### **Race**

The 2011 Census recorded that 4,933 people (4.1%) in the Borough are from a Black or Minority Ethnic background. This is lower than the Kent average of 6.9% and the national average of 14.6%.

### **Religion or belief**

The 2011 Census recorded that 63.7% of the population is Christian. This is higher than the Kent average of 61.8% and the national average of 59.4%. 27.3% of the population have no religion. Small proportions of the remainder of the population are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish.

### **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation data is not captured by the Census. Data from the Integrated Household Survey estimates that 1.6% of adults in the UK identified their sexual identity as lesbian, gay or bisexual in 2014.

### **Pregnancy or maternity**

In 2014, there were 62.8 births per 1,000 of the Borough's population. This is slightly higher than the Kent average of 62.4 and the national average of 62.1.

### **Marital or civil partnership status**

The 2011 Census recorded that 53.4% of the Borough's population are married. This is higher than the Kent average of 48.9% and the national average of 46.6%.

### **Gender reassignment**

At present, there is no official estimate of the trans population. Gender reassignment data is not captured by the Census.

## **Equality Objectives**

Under the Equality Act (2010) we are required to prepare and publish one or more objectives to show how we will achieve any of the things mentioned in the aims of the general equality duty. Our objectives for 2016-2020 are set out below.

### **Equality objective 1**

As a community leader, we will advance equality of opportunity for those living within Snodland, East Malling and Trench to achieve better outcomes in relation to health, employment and education.

### **Equality objective 2**

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by increasing the number of customers with a disability who are able to use our services regardless of the method they use to access the service.

### **Equality objective 3**

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by increasing uptake of the assisted waste collection ("pull out") service where needed.

### **Equality objective 4**

As an employer, we will eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation by giving staff and Members the necessary skills and understanding to promote equality and diversity in both service delivery and employment.

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### **Equality objective 1**

As a community leader, we will advance equality of opportunity for those living within Snodland, East Malling and Trench to achieve better outcomes in relation to health, employment and education.

### **Why we have chosen this objective:**

The Government's latest Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 indicates that parts of the wards of Snodland, East Malling and Trench are significantly more deprived than other areas in the Borough including poorer health, higher levels of worklessness and poverty, and lower levels of educational attainment.

**We will measure outcomes against this objective for the following protected characteristics:**

- Sex (Gender)
- Race
- Marital and Civil Partnership Status
- Disability

**We will report the following information against this objective on an annual basis:**

A summary of demographic information of those who participate in health initiatives/events, job clubs and youth events.

**Our action plan to deliver this objective is:**

1. Report outcomes from the delivery of Community Action Plans by the Partnership Groups for each area.
2. Lobby Kent County Council Public Health Director to obtain re-assurances for continued funding.
3. Work with key partners to ensure they are adopting the same approach to programme recruitment.
4. Work with community development colleagues to ensure programmes are promoted in the right areas.
5. Work with GP Practices to encourage referrals onto programmes.
6. Select venues with ease of access.
7. Obtain postcode and demographic data from attendees.
8. Work with individuals on a 1-1 basis where appropriate to encourage completion of programme and identify potential onward referrals to support their wider health issues.

**The responsible officers for delivering this objective are:**

- Chief Environmental Health Officer
- Scrutiny and Partnership Officer

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## **Equality objective 2**

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by increasing the number of customers with a disability who are able to use our services regardless of the method they use to access the service.

**Why we have chosen this objective:**

According to Cabinet Office statistics, in 2014 “just under 10% of the population may never be able to gain basic digital capabilities, because of disabilities or basic literacy skills”. Our aim will be to provide support to anyone who cannot independently access the Council’s digital services.

**We will measure outcomes against this objective for the following protected characteristics:**

- Disability

**We will report the following information against this objective on an annual basis:**

- The number of complaints received that relate to customers with a disability not being able to access a service.
- Rating improvement against individual criteria in the DAC annual assessment undertaken as part of the SOCITM Better Connected report.

**Our action plan to deliver this objective is:**

1. To monitor comments and complaints regarding the accessibility of services to customers with a disability.
2. To review the face-to-face service offered to customers with a disability.

**The responsible officers for delivering this objective are:**

- Personnel & Customer Services Manager
- IT Development Manager

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### **Equality objective 3**

As a service provider, we will advance equality of opportunity by increasing uptake of the assisted waste collection (“pull out”) service where needed.

**Why we have chosen this objective:**

Approximately 500 households currently receive this service. Although this is lower than the number of households with one or more persons with a long-term health problem or disability, we would expect that many households already receive assistance from others within the household or from neighbours etc. However, we still need to establish whether there may be additional households that require our assistance.

**We will measure outcomes against this objective for the following protected characteristics:**

- Disability

**We will report the following information against this objective on an annual basis:**

Percentage of households that receive the service against those who are entitled to use the service.

**Our action plan to deliver this objective is:**

1. Review current households in receipt of the service.
2. Remove households that are not entitled to the service.
3. Publicise the service via leaflets and website to encourage uptake from those entitled to it.

4. Publicise via community groups such as Tonbridge and Malling Seniors and Snodland Community Partnership.
5. Publicise via parish newsletters.

**The responsible officer for delivering this objective is:**

- Waste Service Manager
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## **Equality objective 4**

As an employer, we will eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation by giving staff and Members the necessary skills and understanding to promote equality and diversity in both service delivery and employment.

**Why we have chosen this objective:**

Equality and diversity training was last provided to all staff in 2010 and we want to ensure that staff and Councillors maintain their awareness of corporate values.

**We will measure outcomes against this objective for the following protected characteristics:**

- Disability
- Age
- Sex (gender)
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Gender reassignment

**We will report the following information against this objective on an annual basis:**

Number of reports or complaints of proven discrimination or inequality.

**Our action plan to deliver this objective is:**

1. All council staff will be provided with updated awareness training by September 2016.
2. The Code of Conduct for staff will be updated and made mandatory for staff to read.
3. Reinforce the need to report instances of inappropriate behaviour by staff or Members.

**The responsible officer for delivering this objective is:**

- Customer Services & Personnel Manager