

## Appendix 1

### Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2017-2021 Update

<b>As a Community Leader</b> We will engage with residents in an open and meaningful way.	
Provide a consistent approach to providing information to residents in alternative formats across the authority	<p>The first version of the Accessibility Statement has been published on the website. This will be amended where necessary following the completion of a full accessibility audit which was carried out in October 2019.</p> <p><a href="https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/accessibility-statement">https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/accessibility-statement</a></p>
Demonstrate effective engagement with the community, charity and voluntary sector, providing evidence of involvement in the Council's decision-making process.	<p>The Council undertook 14 surveys in 2019-20 including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff Satisfaction &amp; Engagement</li><li>• Annual Budget Survey</li><li>• Customer Contact Satisfaction</li><li>• Leisure Service</li><li>• Street Cleaning Satisfaction Survey</li><li>• Climate Change Resident Opinion &amp; Priorities Survey</li><li>• Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleepers Policy Priorities Survey</li></ul> <p>The average response rate for our external surveys was 1094 (these response rate applies to general public consultations only).</p> <p>Consultation remains strong and engagement with the community voluntary sector has been consistent. This is achieved in collaboration with the Communications team and the Equalities and Corporate</p>

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	<p>Policy officer. Consultations are promoted via the Council’s social media channels and via Community forums. Involve Maidstone, for example, include Council consultations in its weekly newsletter which reaches over 700 recipients. The Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer also attends forum meetings with partners and will report on live consultations, as appropriate.</p> <p>The team also devise and run focus group sessions, for example member sessions as part of the Waste review were devised delivered in 2019 for the transformation team.</p>
<p>Raise the profile of the Military Covenant in Maidstone</p>	<p>The inclusion of the Military Covenant in the Equalities Action Plan and the role of officer champion being assigned to the Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer has provided continuity and served to raise the profile of the Covenant within the organisation. The Armed Forces officer and Member champions have attended a number of events on behalf of the Council. These have included the annual Kent and Medway Civilian Covenant conference and briefing sessions at 36 regiment. In 2019, The Armed Forces Officer Champion attended the Government Consultation at the MOD and contributed to the development of a ‘Strategy for our Veterans UK.</p> <p>The Officer Champion is responsible for the dissemination of information across the organisation on a regular basis to support and inform the Mayoralty, Communications and Events teams. The role now supports the Mayoralty team in engaging and shaping civic events with 36 Regiment.</p>
<p>As a Service Provider We will ensure our services are inclusive, accessible and support residents and customers.</p>	

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<p>Ensure sensitive personal data is only collected where required and managed securely</p>	<p>All consultation requests now need to complete a scoping form which includes identifying audience/ customers / key users that are needed to consult, and to establish key outputs, to ensure justification behind data collection.</p> <p>The new consultation system allows the Policy and Information team to manage personal data more securely.</p>
<p>Raise standard of Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs)</p>	<p>The standard of Equalities Impact Assessments has improved and the knowledge within the organisation of the process has grown significantly. Guidance is available on the intranet and support and guidance is offered to all officers by the Policy and Information team. There is continuous uptake from Services across the Council. Training for unit managers was delayed but will now take place in late summer/autumn. Training has been rolled forward into the new action plan.</p>
<p>Provide a consistent approach to contract management across the services.</p>	<p>The commissioning, procurement and contract management processes have been improved and follow a consistent approach across the Council. Procurement exercises are carried out in compliance with the Equalities Act. The production of a Commissioning and Procurement Strategy is still in progress. The action has been rolled forward into the new action plan.</p>

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<p>To take steps to becoming a Dementia Friendly Organisation</p>	<p>Dementia Awareness Training sessions have been held with staff.</p> <p>The Museum has held Dementia Friendly openings. On four Sundays a year and allow free entry to People living with Dementia and a guest to explore the museum and temporary exhibitions in a quiet, unhurried way and enjoy a tea and biscuit afterwards.</p> <p>The Customer Services team are looking to develop a similar offer to Ashford Borough Council who have worked with Phoenix Group towards becoming a dementia friendly Gateway. The Link are exploring a similar offer with a Maidstone based group called Memorybillia. There is no fixed date to take this forward, progress was halted as COVID-19 began to impact in March 2020.</p> <p>The Senior Public Health Officer attends 'Building a Dementia Friendly Maidstone Group' quarterly</p> <p>A Dementia Friendly Golf Programme was provided for free in partnership with Cobtree Golf Club (Mytime Active). This programme was delivered free of charge until the end of Sept 2019. Mytime Active secured funding to continue providing the programme with a (subsidised) cost to the participant.</p> <p>A volunteer led weekly dementia friendly walk in Mote Park has been developed. This incorporates the dementia talking posts in Mote Park which were installed a few years ago.</p> <p>Maidstone Leisure Centre deliver a 'Young Activity Dementia Group' <a href="http://www.maidstoneleisure.org/young-activity-dementia-group/">http://www.maidstoneleisure.org/young-activity-dementia-group/</a></p>
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As an Employer To have a workforce that feels valued and respected.	
To deliver annual Equalities training to all elected members as part of ongoing professional development	Equalities training has been included in the member training programme but postponed due to other training or briefing sessions taking precedence. It will be included in the proposed schedule of training for 2020/21 to be taken to the Democracy and General Purposes Committee in September. The action has been rolled forward into the new action plan.
To ensure newly elected members are offered appropriate support to be effective in their role	A process has been implemented which ensures member's accessibility needs are met. This can include, for example hard copy agendas and large print agendas. Information on equalities is now provided in new member packs.