

(Draft) Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2022-2025

As a Community Leader			
Objective			
To lead by example, to ensure every individual resident is connected and supported.			
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>We will work closely with our partners (Voluntary and Community Sector, Anchor Institutions, Parishes and Church and Faith groups) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for joined up working and improving our ability to share information to support and engage our wider communities Increase volunteering opportunities and participation, funding and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create join up with Housing Associations to deliver hardship payments as part of the Xantura project Implement no wrong door (local campaign to signpost to services) – increasing access to services Provide access to digital training and support at Trinity House. 	<p>Housing/Revs and Bens</p> <p>All teams (led by Inclusion board)</p> <p>Housing Communities, Policy & Engagement team</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>Review Jan 2023</p>
<p>We will undertake a review of consultation and engagement activities to ensure that they maximise resident participation and are representative of Maidstone’s demographic.</p>	<p>Increase response rates from underrepresented groups through us of Let’s Talk Maidstone (the Council’s new public engagement platform)</p>	<p>Communities, Policy & Engagement team</p>	<p>Review Jan 2023</p>
<p>We will support and promote diversity and inclusion in the borough through our communications and</p>	<p>Expand internal Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group</p>	<p>Communities, Policy & Engagement team</p>	<p>Jan 2023</p>

events – with a focus on our seldom-heard communities.	to provide internal direction and challenge Create Diversity Calendar - Annual calendar of events to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion in Maidstone	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Group	March 2023
We will support our serving and veteran communities through our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act 2021 with guidance provided to staff across all services.	Provide guidance to enable all staff to support Armed Forces Community	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	March 2023
Connections to other plans			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan • Communications Plan • Recovery and Renewal Strategy • Financial Inclusion Strategy 			

As an Employer			
Objective			
To lead a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the borough of Maidstone where residents and colleagues feel safe, confident, and empowered to challenge and bring about change.			
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale
We will train our staff so that they are skilled in inclusive practice, to work with communities who are	Provide Staff training in Cultural Competencies	HR	Review Jan 2023

less able, or willing, to participate in life in their local neighbourhoods. We will provide training and support to staff so they can recognise and manage unacceptable behaviours	Introduce Equalities Champions (including elected member and senior leadership) Deliver the Culture change project	Policy Communities & Engagement team HR	April 2023 Ongoing
We will creating a strong, internal sense of community within the organisation.	Introduce Annual staff EDI survey to identify need and benchmark progress	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	Jan 2023
We will look after the mental health of our staff and recognise when this offer needs to change	Provide training and support for Mental Health Champions	HR	Ongoing
Connections to other plans			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan • Workforce Strategy 			

As a Service Provider			
Objective			
To deliver inclusive services in accordance with Council's values.			
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale
We will use specific and meaningful language when referring to diverse communities	Adopt of LGA Inclusive Language Guide	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	April 2023

We will support access to services and support through ICT process, communication and join up with partners	Proactively use 'neutral spaces' to increase access to support and services for residents	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Group All Services	Review Jan 2023
We will take an evidence-based approach to leading recovery in Maidstone including a specific work stream on communities.	Identify emerging needs from Census data	Data Analytics team	Dec 2023 (ongoing release)
We will review the Equalities Impact Assessment processes.	Include 'Poverty' as a local protected characteristic with the EqIA process	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	Jan 2023
We will review and identify our policies where we consider equalities impacts and identify how we can improve outcomes through revisions to policy.	Include Armed Forces Act 2021 in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	Dec 2022
	Prioritise existing Policies by review date and implement process of review for equalities.	Policy, Communities & Engagement team	Review Feb 2023
Connections to other plans			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan • Recovery & Renewal Strategy • Digital Strategy 			