Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan December 2023 to March 2025

Our headline equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives are focused on three themes. These three themes reflect the Local Government Association (LGA) Equality Framework for Local Government 2020 which is designed to help Councils plan and deliver equality outcomes.

1. Knowing our communities: we will listen and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone.
2. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment: we will actively champion our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle inequality together.
3. Skilled and committed workforce: we will build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected.

Delivering this action plan will ensure we meet the principles upon which delivery of our key priorities is based, specifically:

- Use data and research to drive improvement, listening carefully to our residents, communities and businesses to underpin informed decisions.
- Work together with everyone in our networks to improve our borough and support our residents to be healthy, our communities to be strong and our businesses to thrive.
- Help all our communities to benefit and prosper from our strong local economy.

1. Knowing our communities

We will listen and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone

	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on progress
1.1	Consult with the community on our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	January - March 2024	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships / Corporate Services	Our policy meets the needs of our communities	
1.2	Continue our engagement with community groups to:				
1.2(a)	• Support the development of the Cheltenham Alliance for Race Equity (CARE)	Ongoing	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships	Increased confidence amongst communities	

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	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on progress
1.2(b)	• Provide support for Black History Month	October 2024		that all agencies are working together for better outcomes	
1.2(c)	• Facilitate activities to celebrate Interfaith Week	November 2024			
1.2(d)	• Host the annual holocaust Memorial Day service	January 2024			Completed
1.2(e)	• Participate in the LGBT partnership	Ongoing			
1.2(f)	• Respond to issues raised by the Accessibility Forum	Ongoing			
1.3	Use data from our community profiles, our partner organisations, and from our community engagement to consult with community groups	Ongoing	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships with other services	Increased confidence amongst communities that all agencies are working together for better outcomes	
1.4	Develop an events calendar and use our social media platforms, website and other mechanisms (e.g., flags) to publicise notable dates celebrating the different communities living in our borough	April 2024	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships / Comms & Marketing	Ensure people are engaged, involved and consulted	
1.5	Embed governance arrangements for conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA):		Monitoring Officer / Democratic Services		
1.5(a)	• Review EIA guidance and training		Monitoring Officer / Democratic Services	Improve data collection, publish it often and use it to make decision that focus on the needs of all our communities	
1.5(b)	• Improve monitoring of compliance				
1.5(c)	• Publish all EIAs with the relevant reports to committee and on the EDI pages on the council's website				

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	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on progress
				Ensure our services are designed in an accessible and inclusive way	
1.6	Embed equality into our procurement process to ensure our suppliers and contractors adhere to our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and to drive out social value from our procurements	June 2024	Corporate Services / Procurement	Improved service provision and knowledge about our commitment to EDI from our suppliers and contractors	
1.7	Design accessibility into our processes:				
1.7(a)	• Develop a community engagement strategy to understand how our communities would like to communicate with us	October 2024	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ensure our services are designed in an accessible and inclusive way	
1.7(b)	• Develop our digital platform for residents to self-serve at a time that suits them	October 2024	Commercial & Development / Customer Services		
1.7(c)	• Continue improving the accessibility of our website	Ongoing	Comms & Marketing		
1.7(d)	• Ensure documents are easy to understand and available in accessible formats	Ongoing	All services / EDI Working Group		
1.7(e)	• Ensure that disabled access is always carefully considered in CBC's decision-making including within planning, licencing, parks, events (including Cheltenham Trust), taxi licencing decisions, parking, parks, access to municipal buildings, sports, public lavatories	Ongoing	All Service Managers/Accessibility Forum		

2. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

We will actively champion our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle inequality together

	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on Progress
2.1	Review our EDI policy and action plan regularly and report to council annually to ensure we meet our commitments	December 2024	EDI Working Group / Monitoring Officer	Delivery of the Council's commitment is monitored regularly and is reported on annually in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty	
2.2	Review our EDI data collection practices:				
2.2(a)	• Identify areas of the organisation where we already, or could, collect data as part of our interaction with customers, e.g., formal complaints process	To be set by working group	EDI Working Group	Improve data collection and use it to make decisions that focus on the needs of all our communities	
2.2(b)	• Investigate how we collect and use our EDI data				
2.2(c)	• Develop a portfolio of case studies to show where data has been used to improve services				
2.3	Ensure hate crime is recognised within our complaints process	June 2024	Customer Services		

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	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on Progress
2.4	Participate in groups led by others to tackle inequalities:				
2.4(a)	• The County Hate Crime Group, including delivering training on hate crime awareness	Ongoing	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships	Actively champion our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle inequality together	
2.4(b)	• The NHS led Integrated Locality Partnership to tackle health inequalities in Cheltenham	Ongoing			
2.5	Lead groups to tackle inequalities:				
2.5(a)	• Continue delivery of the No Child Left Behind project with our partners to combat child poverty in Cheltenham	Ongoing	Communities, Wellbeing & Partnerships	Actively champion our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle inequality together	
2.5(b)	• Facilitate the facing financial hardship multi-agency group focusing on how best to support people living on low incomes	Ongoing			
2.6	Revise our Statement of Community Involvement to increase community involvement and engagement in development plans for the borough	December 2023	Policy & Placemaking		

3. Skilled and committed workforce

We will build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on Progress
	Establish an EDI working group with representation from across organisation to promote and embed EDI in our workplace	December 2023	Monitoring Officer / Learning & Development	Ensure that all our employees feel equal and included and are not subject to any unfair disadvantage regardless of their background and/or characteristics	
	We will develop an inclusive recruitment programme:				
	− Deliver training on bias in the recruitment process including Safer Recruitment for those who take part in interview processes	June 2024	HR & Learning & Development	To ensure we have an unbiased recruitment process where all employees involved in recruitment understand their responsibilities	
	− Analyse data collected through recruitment to improve our processes	September 2024			
	− Review our interview competency pack and ensure we reflect equality, diversity and inclusion within it	October 2024		To ensure opportunities to work for the Council are open and accessible to all	
	− Review recruitment and onboarding documentation and processes to ensure they are inclusive, including adding 'preferred name/pronouns'' on application form and linking to ICT new starter form and any Payroll processes so correct name is visible across all systems	December 2024		To reinforce the importance of EDI for the Council and gauge candidate understanding of EDI. To ensure opportunities to work for the Council are open and accessible to all and that all new starters feel equal and included	
	We will develop our equality, diversity and inclusion training:				

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	Activity	Timescale	Service Area	Meets our PSED objective	Update on Progress
	− Undertake a review to ensure it supports our EDI policy and action plan	February 2024	Learning & Development	Equip our employees and members to meet the needs of the communities we serve	
	− Develop comprehensive training for all our employees in a way which is accessible to all	May 2024	Learning & Development	Our employees have a better understanding of their personal responsibilities in the workplace and when working with/supporting service users	
	− Enhance the EDI training element of the Member development programme, including cultural awareness, and signpost Members to the LGA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Councillor workbook	May 2024	Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services	Members have an improved understanding of the Equality Act and why the act is important to them in their role.	
	Capture, analyse and publish annually all relevant employee data	March 2024 and March 2025	HR	Open and transparent approach with results used to ensure appropriate action is taken where necessary to re-address any imbalance	