

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

30th January 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor AS Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Law & Governance

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Proposed New Equalities Objectives 2025-28

Is this a key decision?

No – although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant

Executive summary:

Coventry City Council is committed to fulfilling its duties as a public authority under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As part of this general duty, we are required to comply with a specific duty to publish a set of equality objectives which will further the aims of the general duty. The current set of equality objectives were set in 2022 for a period of three years and will therefore expire at the end of March 2025. A set of four proposed new equality objectives were recently the subject of a public consultation exercise which has now been analysed. This report therefore seeks approval for the formal adoption of the proposed new equality objectives for 2025-28.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the formal adoption of the following proposed new equality objectives for the Council for 2025-28:

Equality Objective 1: Deliver inclusive services that better meet the needs of our diverse communities through better use of data, including equalities data

Equality Objective 2: Promote integration, remove barriers and improve community cohesion across Coventry through targeted activities that address the diverse needs of our newly arrived communities

Equality Objective 3: To Increase year on year the percentage of appointments made to candidates who are either LGBT+, with a Disability or from the Global Majority and reduce the number of leavers from these demographics.

Equality Objective 4: To Improve outcomes and tackle inequalities within our communities

List of appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
Appendix 2 – Consultation Report

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

Equality Act 2010: specific duties to support the Equality Duty. What do I need to know?
A quick start guide for public sector organisations
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/specific-duties>

Has it been or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Proposed New Equality Objectives 2025-28

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Council is required, as a listed public authority, to comply with all elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty is comprised of the general duty and specific duties.
- 1.2 The general duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 1.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires the Council, as a listed public authority, to publish equality objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.
- 1.4 The existing set of 5 equality objectives were set in 2022 for a period of three years and will expire at the end of March 2025.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Council's current set of 5 equality objectives were adopted in 2022 and some key highlights of the progress made against these objectives can be found below.
- 2.2 **Equality Objective 1** - Improve the collection and analysis of equality data to make more informed decisions on how services are delivered.
- 2.2.1 A series of projects have been delivered under this objective as follows:
- 2.2.2 **Waste Services** – Data on fly tipping, bulky waste and the tip booking system was analysed at lower super output level and compared, using the Acorn analysis tool, to factors such as the Index of Deprivation and income level. This enabled the service to identify clear trends in relation to the use of these services.
- 2.2.3 **Community Support Team – Household Fund** - The demographic data of applicants was analysed by ward level and this showed that the highest number of applications were being received from those wards with the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation score. This indicated that the most financially vulnerable clients were accessing the fund. Further analysis by ethnicity showed an under-representation of applications received from people identifying as Asian/Asian British across the city. This enabled a series of actions to be set as part of this project.

- 2.2.4 **Adult Education** – work was undertaken with the service to link client data to data sets such as the Index of Deprivation and income. Additional software was also sourced to facilitate this.
- 2.2.5 **Foster Carers** – initial work has taken place to collate postcode data of foster carers/those expressing an interest in foster care. Analysis of this data is being undertaken, with a view to setting relevant actions over the coming months.
- 2.3 **Equality Objective 2** - Develop better understanding of our diverse communities in order to shape and deliver the Council's Integration policy and practice for the city and its residents.
- 2.3.1 Extensive engagement work was undertaken with relevant stakeholders to inform the development of a draft Integration Strategy under this equality objective. This enabled the views of a range of organisations and individuals with 'lived experience' of the different stages of the integration journey to actively feed into the strategy. Work has been commissioned across various themes to ensure alignment with the broader Integration Strategy. These efforts are helping to shape and refine the action plan, ensuring each priority area is evidence-based and reflective of the needs of Coventry's diverse communities. As part of this, a deep dive into migrant health and wellbeing was recently undertaken and represents a critical advancement in understanding and responding to migrant health needs. Ongoing thematic development is ensuring that the Integration Strategy and its action plan remain robust, targeted, and reflective of Coventry's commitment to fostering inclusive and positive relationships within the city.
- 2.4 **Equality Objective** - To increase year on year the percentage of applications for employment received and appointments made for candidates who are LGBT+, declare a disability or are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 2.4.1 Applications received
- 2.4.2 There have been a relatively similar number of applications received from candidates from a minority ethnic background since 2022 to date. At the end of 2022 a total of 61.12% of applications were received from minority ethnic candidates as compared to 61.88% by the end of September 2024.
- 2.4.3 There has been an increase in the number of applications received from candidates who declared a disability since 2022 to date. At the end of 2022 a total of 6.74% of applications were received from candidates with a disability as compared to 8.96% by the end of September 2024.
- 2.4.4 There has been a decrease in the number of applications received from candidates from the LGBT+ community since 2022. At the end of 2022 a total of 7.95% of applications were received from LGBT+ candidates as compared to 5.90% by the end of September 2024.
- 2.4.5 Appointments/offers made

- 2.4.6 There has been a significant decrease in the number of appointments or offers made to candidates from a minority ethnic background since 2022 to date. At the end of 2022 a total of 40.94% of appointments or offers were made to minority ethnic candidates as compared to 29.96% by the end of September 2024. It should be noted that during the period between 2022 and the end of September 2024 the number of appointments made has fluctuated between the two percentages. As a result of the disproportionate number of appointments made (which are anonymised compared to applications received) we have introduced ethnically diverse interview panels for all jobs which are Grade 8 and above.
- 2.4.7 There has been an increase in the number of appointments or offers made to candidates with a disability since 2022 to date. At the end of 2022 a total of 8.19% of appointments or offers were made to candidates with a disability as compared to 11.39% by the end of September 2024.
- 2.4.8 There has been a relatively similar number of appointments or offers made to LGBT+ candidates since the end of 2022 to date. At the end of 2022 a total of 5.26% of appointments or offers were made to LGBT+ candidates compared to 5.91% by the end of September 2024.
- 2.4.9 The reduction in applications received and appointments/offers made to individuals from the 3 priority groups under this equality objective has to be considered in the context of the Council's financial position and the reduction in vacancies advertised.
- 2.4.10 As a result of the overall decrease in appointment figures, the Council introduced a new initiative in September 2024, 'Inclusive Recruitment' where all interview panels for posts Grade 8 and above include a person from a minority ethnic background as a panel member. All panel members are employees and have received training to ensure that there are able to add value to this initiative. The review of this initiative on its impact and effectiveness will be presented at a future Diversity & Inclusion Board.
In addition,
- Continued ongoing development for hiring managers which focusses on Recruiting for Workforce Diversity.
 - All vacancies are sent to all community organisations on a weekly basis. The Council is also making use of its subscription to Race Equality Matters to promote and advertise posts.
 - Continued engagement with the community and The Job Shop will help to enable candidates from minority ethnic backgrounds to be successful at reaching shortlisting to secure an assessment or interview.
- Finally leavers information will be one of the reporting elements within the Council's Equality Objectives 3 for the coming year.
- 2.4.11 Additional information on disability data - to support the Council's commitment to engaging more candidates with a disability to apply for vacancies our accessibility project has recently been completed going forward we will monitor the number of applications who have accessed the changes These changes include the use of assistive technology for people with a visual impairment, a contact process for candidates to liaise with the recruitment team via any suitable method (in person, on videocall, telephone or email) and the opportunity to upload video applications.

We will continue with our social media campaign which promotes our commitment to recruiting people with a disability or who are neurodiverse and actively welcome applicants. We will also continue to ensure our adverts promote Coventry as an Inclusive Employer and Disability Confident Leader. In addition, the Inclusive Recruitment initiative has also been extended to cover disability.

2.4.12 Additional information on LGBT+ data - we are currently stating in our adverts that LGBT+ employees are under-represented across the organisation, and we will continue to ensure that our adverts are committed to promoting Coventry as an Inclusive Employer. Research work is planned to increase visibility of the Council as an employer of choice to the LGBT+ community, including working more closely with our PRIDE network, the ENEI, with our local LGBT+ communities and potentially hosting a recruitment stand at local Pride events. In addition, the Inclusive Recruitment initiative has also been extended to cover LGBT+.

2.5 **Equality Objective 4** - To increase the effective delivery of Council services in key areas.

2.5.1 The EO4 actions below were set for the Household Support Fund EO1 project.

- Encourage applicants to complete the ethnicity monitoring wherever possible.
- Work with colleagues in Community Resilience to promote Household Support Fund through Community Messengers to people who identify as Asian/Asian British.
- Provide a set of marketing assets which targeted specific cohorts in the community including Asian/Asian British and ensure messaging targeted communities without access to digital/social media
- Ensure that people were advised that on-line forms were available in other languages and how to access them.
- Implement a set of purposeful reports which were used to monitor applications per ward and by ethnicity in order to compare against the city population - where necessary putting in mitigating measures to ensure the Household Support Fund was being used to target households in financial hardship.
- The use of Trusted Referral routes as an alternative application method for people who were not able to use the on-line form. Working closely with partner organisations to provide this service, Central England Law Centre, Coventry Citizens' Advice and Coventry Independent Advice Service.

2.5.2 As part of the #CovConnects programme there are many opportunities where digital inclusion is promoted across the city and within our communities who are experiencing data poverty. The databank distribution is now at 23 different points.

2.5.3 Working closely with Cost-of-Living campaign, leaflets, flyers and videos were made available in different languages, and all promoting Cost of Living support available which includes Household Support Fund.

2.5.4 The actions set for this service were largely delivered during 2022.

- 2.5.5 Waste Services: Ongoing budget constraints and changes to domestic waste services has meant that the Bring the Tip to you project and Project Rome have been paused. These projects include actions developed in response to the data analysis undertaken as part of the Equality Objective One project with the service. However, the skill set to analyse data for these projects has been utilised in other areas within Waste. As the new paid for garden waste service has been launched, weekly extracts of the data are being analysed and uploaded to a PowerBi dashboard, allowing insights into the areas that are taking up subscriptions and in turn identify areas that are not.
- 2.6 **Equality Objective 5** - Increase participation from residents and visitors with disabilities in sporting and cultural activities including events in the city.
- 2.6.1 Cultural Compact was restructured as 'Coventry Culture Works' during 2023/24 with a sustainable financial and governance basis to deliver on Cultural Strategy actions. A sector-led 'Future Works' event brought together policy makers, freelancers and cultural organisations to agree priorities and actions that will help inform Cultural Strategy refresh activity, supporting health, wellbeing and diversity goals. During Q1 and Q2 24/25 the Culture Works Governance model was further refined, and the development of a diverse and inclusive operating model is planned that will be more democratic and effective in implementing the strategy refresh and progressing the next phase of delivery in a post City of Culture era.
- 2.6.2 Heritage Strategy – A consultancy has been appointed to develop the draft strategy through to completion. Further work and refinement has been paused pending additional heritage asset management information gathering. The draft strategy is expected to be finalised and approved for public consultation later in 2024/25. Actions and outputs will include specific reference to increasing diversity and accessibility in heritage engagement, and future delivery will identify specific projects to achieve this.
- 2.6.3 Public Arts Strategy - this strategy is awaiting appointment of a suitable consultancy to support its development. The connected Public Art Gateway group is firmly established and meets regularly to assess proposals for new public art in the city, with consideration for safety, accessibility and themes promoting diversity featuring highly in the assessment process. A public art audit has been carried out and data shared with Coventry Digital, which is helping to create an online resource for exploring the city's public art thereby supporting greater accessibility for disabled residents. Further public art projects and proposals were considered which present art in accessible outdoor spaces, while making public areas more welcoming to all residents.
- 2.6.4 Arts and Culture Programme Grants - Previous funded arts and culture grant schemes operated by the Council closed in 22/23, with evaluation reports received in 23/24 indicating positive impacts on organisational development and resilience, and positive outcomes for residents facing barriers to cultural participation through their engagement with Council supported projects. During 23-24 the service secured WMCA Double Devolved funding to support cultural commissions and placemaking activities that will enrich cultural participation in communities. The outline delivery plan was approved early in Q1 24/25 and a

series of activities – which link to Future Works priorities, Cultural Strategy and One Coventry ethos - are being delivered during 2024/25 which will observe principles of inclusion and accessibility to ensure engagement and participation is open to all. These include 4x Commissions for delivery of inclusive, co-created activities which were awarded in Q1 with delivery of activity from Q2. One of these commissions works exclusively with disabled and neuro diverse artists and performers, while other activities in the funded programme have dedicated budgets to support accessibility through bursaries and British Sign Language.

- 2.6.5 Culture – Further Sector Support - Through revenue grant/service agreements with Culture Coventry and Belgrade Theatre, accessibility has been facilitated for those residents facing barriers to cultural participation, including targeted ticketing concessions, outreach projects in the community, education programmes with SEND schools, and through artistic opportunities and collaborations with local disability groups. In Q2 Belgrade Theatre continued its partnership with Open Theatre and 3 Coventry SEND schools to run a weekly 'Next Steps' talent development programme for 10-15 young people with disabilities and provided paid placements for 2 young artists with learning disabilities to support these groups. There will be a reduction in these revenue grants/agreements from 2025/26 owing to financial pressures facing the Council, but organisations are working on mitigation plans to ensure that they will still be able to fulfil key performance indicators.
- 2.6.6 Sport and Physical Activity Strategy - Work has commenced on the Coventry Sport and Physical Activity Strategy with consultation plans underway. The strategy is being developed collaboratively between the Sport and Public Health services and consultation will include a number of Council services as well as the Disability Equality Action Partnership (DEAP), to ensure that the strategy is reflective of and improves experiences for people with disabilities. The strategy is also being developed alongside the recently launched Sport and Physical Activity Charter by the DEAP. The consultant has now been commissioned and work has begun on the strategy development with further consultation taking place in January 2025.
- 2.6.7 Coventry Playing Pitch Strategy - The Coventry Playing Pitch Strategy was approved at Cabinet on the 7th November 2023 and has now officially been adopted by the city. This went through consultation with the DEAP who supported the delivery of the strategy. The action plan is now being developed and the Stage E meeting has taken place which is the process of updating the data in the strategy alongside nation governing bodies of sport.
- 2.6.8 Coventry Indoor Sports and Aquatics Facilities Strategy - The consultation and assessment report have been completed which has recommended a Facilities Planning Model (FPM) to be run which will be built into the strategy development. The FPM study was completed regarding sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls. This will determine the current and future need of these facilities in the city based on current and projected populations. The next step will be to gain the relevant approvals and take to Cabinet in March 2025.
- 2.6.9 GO CV - The monthly newsletters, social media posts and App have promoted a range of activities and events to Go CV members including Go CV and Go CV+

offers and discounts. This has included discounted offers to events/activities such as summertime sessions at The Wave Waterpark, discounted Outdoor Activity Camps, Bands in the Park and the Lunt Roman Festival 2024. There has also been free entry to competitions such as winning a £50 'back to school' shopping voucher. Go CV has also promoted the Quiet Time at The Wave session which is aimed at families and individuals who have complex needs and disabilities.

2.7 Analysis of the progress made since 2022 with the current set of equality objectives has informed the development of the proposed new set of equality objectives for 2025 (see below). These proposed objectives include both foundational and direct equality objectives, as it has been identified that having a set of equality objectives which is comprised of both foundational and direct objectives is more likely to lead to achieving measurable and sustainable progress on equality and diversity for the organisation.

2.8 Accordingly, the following 4 equality objectives for 2025-28 are proposed:

2.8.1 **Equality Objective 1**

Deliver inclusive services that better meet the needs of our diverse communities through better use of data, including equalities data

The Council is committed to understanding more about its customers and using this intelligence to help shape the way in which we can deliver the best services for those groups of customers in most need.

2.8.2 **Equality Objective 2:**

Promote integration, remove barriers and improve community cohesion across Coventry through targeted activities that address the diverse needs of our newly arrived communities

The Council is keen to retain a strong focus to the third strand of the equality duty around fostering good relations between different groups. This objective will focus on the Council's work on Integration as delivered by the Migration Team.

2.8.3 **Equality Objective 3:**

To increase year on year the percentage of appointments made to candidates who are either LGBT+, with a Disability or from the Global Majority and reduce the number of leavers from these demographics.

The Council is committed to improving the diversity of the Council's workforce to better represent and reflect the diversity of the city.

2.8.4 **Equality Objective 4:**

To improve outcomes and tackle inequalities within our communities

The Council is keen to maximise its work in this area and have more of an impact on addressing inequalities in the city, through its role as a Marmot Partner.

2.9 An annual update of progress of delivery of the equality objectives will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 The consultation on the proposed equality objectives ran from the 4th November to the 29th November 2024. A full report on the consultation can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

3.2 The consultation was hosted on the Council's Let's Talk Coventry consultation and engagement platform. The Let's Talk Coventry platform hosts a number of consultation and engagement exercises and is regularly advertised via email and social media. In particular, the equalities objectives consultation was specifically advertised to a range of internal and external partners and stakeholders.

3.3 The consultation can be summarised as follows:

- A total of 69 responses were received to the online survey.
- All proposed objectives gained overall agreement from respondents to the consultation.
- Objectives 1 and 4 gained the highest level of agreement at 78% of those responding to the survey. This was closely followed by 73% of respondents agreeing with Objective 2.
- Objective 3 had 51% of respondents agreeing to the objective.

3.4 The results of the consultation will be fed into the development of action plans for each Equality Objective and the issues raised will be addressed through this approach.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 It is intended that the proposed new equality objectives for the Council become operational from 1st April 2025; they will be supported by action plans with clear outcomes which will be performance managed and progress reported annually to Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities)..

5 Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

The cost for setting and monitoring equality objectives and delivering equality objectives will be met from within existing resources.

5.2 Legal implications

This report recommends approval for publishing the Council's equality objectives as required under the Equality Act (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. Any sharing of personal data or special category personal data between Council services will be in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council’s Plan
(www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)

The achievement of the equality objectives will be managed in accordance the Council’s performance management framework.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The performance management of the equality objectives will help the Council to manage risk by systematically measuring progress in relation to the equality objectives. This means that areas where good progress is being made can be identified, as well as those areas where progress is not as expected and where corrective action may be needed.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Achieving progress against the equality objectives impacts on the compliance of the whole organisation with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Council, through its employees, has a duty to pay due regard to the three aims of the Equality Act when exercising public functions.

6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

The process outlined in this report will enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the Equality Act (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

An EIA has been completed as part of the process of developing new equality objectives and can be found at Appendix 1.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None identified.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Many of the Council’s objectives are delivered through partnership working which means that there will be implications for partner organisations.

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