

REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	21 JULY 2022	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CORPORATE RESOURCES)	CATEGORY: OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	FIONA PITTAM fiona.pittam@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2021/25: PROPOSED RESOURCING	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee approves the addition of a part time post (22.5 hours) of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer on a fixed term contract of 18 months.
- 1.2 That the post be subject to job evaluation in line with the Council's local scheme.
- 1.3 That the Council's Guidance on Organisational Change is followed to implement these proposals, including formal consultation with employees and Trade Union representatives.
- 1.4 That the change is implemented with effect from 1 September 2022.
- 1.5 That any change to the dates as detailed in the report is delegated to the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) in consultation with the Chief Executive and Chairman of this Committee.
- 1.6 That the cost of the new post is funded from the General Fund Reserve.

2.0 Purpose of report

- 2.1 This report proposes adding an additional part time resource on a fixed term contract in to the Organisational Development and Performance Unit to support the Council with the delivery of the recently approved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 25 and Action Plan.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is an integral part of everyday life at the Council, in the services provided and for the community and residents. The

Council is committed to putting these issues at the centre of decision-making processes to ensure the Council can best meet the needs of its residents and customers.

- 3.2 This will also support the delivery of the key priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24 and make South Derbyshire a great place to live, visit and invest for all current and future residents, customers, businesses and visitors to the District.
- 3.3 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2021-25 sets out the Council's equality commitments over the next four years. This was approved by Full Council at its meeting on 24 February 2021. There are 51 strategic actions to be delivered over the next four years.
- 3.4 The Strategy builds on the work that the Council and partners have undertaken in promoting fair and accessible services to the local community and brings a focus and increased visibility on the actions that are being taken to contribute to a fairer and inclusive society in South Derbyshire.
- 3.5 Whilst this work has been driven forward using existing resources, following discussions with external colleagues and to build resilience and expertise to support the Council deliver on its four year plan, a dedicated post is now requested to move this work forward.

4.0 Delivering the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

- 4.1 The Council has shared accountability for delivering the plan across all service units and has allocated responsibilities to Heads of Service. The Council's Leadership Team will monitor progress and allocate resources appropriately to support the achievement of key milestones and priorities.
- 4.2 An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group has been formed that includes representatives from the Council and Elected Members, community groups and partners. The role of the Group is to monitor progress, provide challenge and give additional insight in to the current and future actions that the Council is looking to delivery for the community.
- 4.3 Jointly, these arrangements will support the Council in meeting the General and Specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 and that equality, diversity and inclusion is actively promoted, communicated and managed for both our wider local communities and our current and future workforce.
- 4.4 Through these arrangements and the insight provided by external partners on the Steering Group, has given rise to the level of resources that is needed to drive forward the equality actions. In particular, the need to have a dedicated specialist resource in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.5 Internal resources, mainly from the Organisational Development and Performance Unit, have brought a focus to the action plan and provided a level of support and professional guidance on the work that is to be undertaken. This has enabled the delivery of key actions around training, Equality Impact Assessments and development of resources to support services and managers. This work is in addition to their current duties and present a risks to other corporate projects that need to be progressed.

- 4.6 In addition, the Organisational Development and Performance Unit also have the majority of actions in the plan to implement. Without additional resources these are at risk of not being delivered in accordance with the existing milestones in the action plan.
- 4.7 To ensure the delivery of the Council's aspirations and obligations in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion, it is proposed to establish a dedicated resource in the Organisational Development and Performance Unit. A new post of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer will provide professional advice and support the Council to meet our statutory duties as a public sector organisation and enhance our reputation as an exemplar for such matters on a local and regional level.
- 4.8 With limited resources to progress the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan and the additional work now being identified, there is a real risk that the plan will not be delivered. This may result in a loss of public confidence in our commitment around the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and the Council meeting its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Proposed structure

- 4.9 It is proposed that an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer post be established on a part time basis (22.5 hours per week) with the Organisational Development and Performance Unit. This will be on a 18 month fixed term contract and to be reviewed after 12 months in post to assess the demand and outcomes being delivered from the investment.
- 4.10 This will provide extra resources to progress the plan and support services until the end of February/March 2024 depending upon when an appointment is made. Whilst this is before the end of the current action plan, it is expected that this will give the Council the insight, knowledge and time to establish procedures/working practices that embed this work firmly into all services and to deliver the final year of the plan.
- 4.11 The new post will provide the resource to provide specialist and expert advice, guidance, challenge and support to the Leadership Team and Heads of Services to transform and sustain the Council's work on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.12 The Officer will be required to build relationships, positively drive change and influence behaviours, practices and culture around equality, diversity and inclusion. Engaging across multiple service areas as well working with Elected Members, and partners to create, embed, promote and raise awareness of inclusion and diversity activities, initiatives, and achievements across the Council.
- 4.13 It is considered that based on the existing work plan and with support from other colleagues in the Organisational Development and Performance Unit, this presents the most viable and efficient solution for the Council. It will also "build" a diverse Council with a unique sense of workforce belonging and the drive to ensure equity in service provision for our diverse communities.
- 4.14 The new post will report to the HR Manager in the Organisational Development and Performance Unit .

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of a PO1 post for 22.5 hours over 18 months will be approximately £38,500.
- 5.2 There is currently no budgetary provision to fund this proposal. Therefore, a fixed-term post would need to be funded from the General Fund Reserve as a one-off cost. This is currently affordable within the MTFP given that the level of the Reserve is greater than estimated following the reporting of the General Fund out-turn elsewhere on this Agenda.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment implications

- 6.1 As with any change programme, the effective management of employment issues will be critical. The Council has a number of policies in place that will support this programme and will ensure that a fair and consistent approach is maintained
- 6.2 The addition of the new post will not have any material impact on any existing post in the Organisational Development and Performance Unit. It will increase the managerial responsibility for the post of Human Resources Manager but with the new post being fixed term it is not considered that requires any further assessment of the post or grade.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (Fixed term contract and part time)

- 6.3 It is proposed that this post is advertised at the earliest opportunity and be made available to the existing workforce as a potential secondment opportunity as well as external recruitment.
- 6.4 The grade of the post will be subject to the completion of a job evaluation assessment in line with the Council's local procedure. It is expected that that grade will be no higher than PO1.

Proposed Consultation and Timetable

- 6.5 In line with the Council's procedure for managing organisational change, formal consultation will be undertaken. This will include the recognised Trade Unions and employees who are both directly and indirectly affected by the proposed changes. The Head of Organisational Development and Performance will undertake this consultation with support from Human Resources.

Action	Timescale
Report considered by Finance & Management Committee	21 July 2022
Formal consultation with staff and Trade Unions*	25 July – 5 August 2022
Effective date of new structure – recruitment to commence	1 September 2022

* A paper will be presented back to the Committee if material changes are made to these proposals.

Legal Implications

- 6.6 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan will ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.7 Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything the Council has stated it will achieve in its Corporate Plan and underpins all its key priorities, themes and values.

Risk Impact

- 6.8 Action can be taken against the Council if we do not fulfil our equality duties as a public sector organisation under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.9 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan provides a clear framework and commitment to advance equality that will minimize the risk of any actions being successful. The proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer post would play a key role of mitigating any risks around not meeting our equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 The post will have regular engagement and consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout the Council services and employment practices.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Impact

- 7.2 The outcomes and impact are detailed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2021-25. These will be reported on an annual basis to Council and made available to the public to ensure transparency and openness with the delivery of the Plan and any further actions that are proposed.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 The proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer post will show how the Council is advancing equality, meeting its statutory obligations and make society fairer for everyone.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 None directly arising from this report.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2021-25 is ambitious, challenging and built on the identified needs and issues that are most important to the local community. The Council has clearly stated the role it can

play to make a difference to lives of people in the community in the services it can provide directly and indirectly with partners.

- 8.2 The proposed part time Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer post, on a fixed term contract will support the delivery of the key priorities in the action plan.

9.0 Background Papers

EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025
Report to Full Council on 24 February 2021

Appendix 1 Proposed New Structure

