

**CABINET**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Diversity and Equality Policy 2019
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present the Council's revised Diversity and Equality policy, for consideration and approval prior to publication. The policy is attached as Appendix 1. Discrimination against employees, potential employees and customers who belong to a protected group is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. There is not a requirement to produce and publish a policy, however, publishing a policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to equality and treating everybody fairly. The policy sets out the Council's approach to valuing diversity, eliminating harassment and promoting equality in everything that it does. This includes how we will ensure potential employees, customers and other organisations who do, or want to do business, with the Council are treated equitably regardless of their background.

The overall aim of the Diversity and Equality policy is to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between diverse communities

in the Council's delivery of services, goods, works and facilities, provision of grants and in engagement with partners.

The policy has been updated to reflect changes in Welsh language legislation and the Department of Work and Pensions "Two Tick" scheme which has been replaced with Disability Confident Employers' scheme, which aims to improve how employers attract, recruit and retain disabled workers.

The policy had been considered and welcomed by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approve the Diversity and Equality Policy, prior to publication and implementation.
2.	Cabinet note the action being taken to improve the number of employees completing the equality e-learning modules.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY</b>
1.01	The Council's Diversity and Equality policy approved by Cabinet in 2012, has been updated to ensure it reflects current legislation and practice.
1.02	Although there is a not a statutory requirement to publish an equality policy, under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against employees, potential employees and customers because of a protected characteristic. The Diversity and Equality policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to developing an inclusive workplace and high quality services which meet peoples' needs.
1.03	Since implementing the policy the Council has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• become accredited as a Disability Confident Employer;</li><li>• continued to make physical alterations to schools increasing disabled pupils' access to all aspects of the school curriculum;</li><li>• continued to ensure access to information by providing information in different languages and formats;</li><li>• published some documents in British Sign Language increasing accessibility for the Deaf communities;</li><li>• increased opportunities for employees to work flexibly enabling them to manage their work life balance.</li></ul>
1.04	The revised policy sets out the Council's approach to valuing diversity, eliminating harassment and promoting equality in everything that it does. This includes how we will ensure current and potential employees, customers and other organisations who do, or want to do business, with the Council are treated equitably regardless of their background.
1.05	Following circulation to HR and wider consultation the policy has been updated to include the following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• replace references to the Two Tick Scheme, Positive about Disabled People with Disability Confident Employer (the Department of Work and Pension's new version of Two Ticks);</li><li>• remove references to Welsh Language Scheme and introduce Welsh Language Standards; and</li><li>• ensure consistency with HR policies.</li></ul>

1.06	Valuing diversity and promoting equality is integral to good practice in employment and service delivery. Responsibility for the policy is an integral part of every employee's role, wherever they work.
1.07	As with any Council policy it is important that managers and employees understand how to apply the policy and their responsibilities to each other and their customers. Two e-learning modules are available on the Council's e-learning portal, Flintshire Academi, but to date only a small number of employees have completed them.
1.08	<p>To encourage employees to complete the two e-learning modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new employees will complete the modules during their induction period;</li> <li>• managers will be prompted to check that other employees have completed the modules as part of appraisals and other supervision meetings;</li> <li>• periodic workforce news promotions.</li> </ul> <p>Completion rates will be monitored and reported within the Strategic Equality Plan annual report presented to Cabinet. Periodic reports will also be monitored by the Chief Officer Team.</p>
1.08	<p>Monitoring of the policy both internally and externally will be undertaken through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workforce diversity monitoring</li> <li>• reviewing complaints about discrimination and incidents of bullying and harassment in the workplace</li> <li>• reviewing customer complaints about discrimination</li> <li>• monitoring the diversity profile of customer experience.</li> </ul> <p>Monitoring aims to discern differences in satisfaction levels or complaints from different sectors of the community as well as identify any potential inequality in employment or trends relating to bullying and harassment in the workplace.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Managers to co-ordinate and prioritise team capacity to ensure all employees are able to complete the two equality e-learning modules.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The policy was circulated to HR, Trade Union, Chief Officer Team and external and internal networks and promoted on the Council website. Consideration of the policy was undertaken by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and supported.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Compliance with the policy will support the organisation to meet the Equality Act 2010 and reduce any risk of litigation.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 Diversity and Equality Policy.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Fiona Mocko Strategic Policy Advisor <b>Telephone:</b> 702122 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk">fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Equality Act 2010:</b> legally protects people, with protected characteristics, from discrimination.</p> <p><b>Disability Confident:</b> a Department of Work and Pensions scheme designed to help employers recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent.</p> <p><b>Protected characteristics:</b> these are the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. The characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.</p> <p><b>Two Ticks scheme:</b> scheme in which employers agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.</p> <p><b>Workforce Diversity monitoring:</b> is the process to capture workforce information by protected group and analyse the data to identify actual or potential inequalities.</p>