

Calderdale MBC

Wards Affected All

Cabinet 8th November 2021



Calderdale Council's Equality Objectives 2021-2025

Report of Director for Public Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced requirements for the adoption of equality objectives by all public authorities and replaced previous requirements for the publication of equality schemes. Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, public authorities are required to develop and publish equality objectives at least every four years.
- 1.2 Calderdale Council's equality objectives were first published on the Council's website in April 2012 and then reviewed annually alongside the Council's progress on equality improvement. At its meeting on 6 March 2017 Cabinet agreed its current equality objectives for the period 2017- 2021.
- 1.3 The draft objectives for the period 2021-2025 are now outlined in Appendix 1. The objectives have been consulted upon to ensure that they take account of the views and priorities of relevant stakeholders. It now remains for Cabinet to consider the draft equality objectives together with comments received from the consultation and make a recommendation to Council.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 The equality objectives will set the policy framework for the Council's approach to equality issues over the next few years, and this needs to be decided by Council.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to:
 - a. endorse the Equality Objectives 2021-2025, as set out in Appendix 1, and recommend them to Council for approval.
 - b. agree that a report outlining progress against the objectives should be brought to Cabinet on an annual basis prior to publication.

4. Background

- 4.1 Calderdale Council and its partners want Calderdale to be a place *where we value everyone being different and through our actions we demonstrate that everyone matters*.
- 4.2 This means understanding that people have different needs and that public services must **put the customer at the heart of service planning and delivery**. It also means acknowledging that some people may face additional barriers in accessing the services they need and so being prepared to change the way services are delivered to overcome these difficulties.
- 4.3 We need to do these things because they are simply the right things to do, in the sense that public services are just that – services that are there for all members of society, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, faith etc. We also have a responsibility to ensure that all local people have equal and fair access to the services they pay for.
- 4.4 There are also financial benefits from understanding that people are different and have different needs and demands. For example, charging services - from the entertainment resources in Libraries to the classes at Sports Centres - need to ensure that they are not unintentionally restricting their market (and hence income) by only catering for certain groups of people.
- 4.5 But probably most importantly, we can get better and more efficient outcomes for local people if we understand, and respond to, the diversity of the Borough. For example, providing exercise classes in a culturally sensitive way can help to improve health amongst older Asian women and prevent them from drawing on far more expensive health and social care services.
- 4.6 Understanding individual needs is crucial if we are to continue to create more self-reliant communities and manage the demand for public services in the future, at a time when resources are severely constrained.
- 4.7 As a Local Authority, we are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (the Equality Duty), created by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 aims to tackle discrimination and inequality, and to ensure that all people are treated fairly and equitably. It specifically prevents discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 4.8 The equality duty consists of a general duty with three main aims and specific duties set out in secondary legislation accompanying the Equality Act. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - 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.

4.9 The specific duties require public bodies to:

- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years, and
- Publish information, at least annually, to show their compliance with the Equality Duty. This must include information relating both to its employees and to people who are affected by the public body's policies and procedures.

4.10 Calderdale Council's proposed objectives are set out in Appendix 1. The objectives were the subject of consultation with the public and stakeholders and the views received are set out in Appendix 2.

4.11 The objectives provide the starting point for the development of a more detailed set of actions to achieve the sort of benefits described in section 4 above.

4.12 The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality, diversity and community relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. The Council's approach reflects this by ensuring equality is part of everyone's job, not just within the domain of a few 'specialists'.

4.13 Progress and performance against the equality objectives will be monitored on a quarterly basis and responsibility for delivery of the objectives will sit with the Council's Senior Management Team.

4.14 Each Directorate will be required to produce an annual position statement in relation to its compliance with the equality duty and demonstrating progress on actions that support the equality objectives. This information will be used to inform the Council's annual equality progress report which it is suggested should be considered by Cabinet prior to it being published as required by the Equality Act.

5. Options considered

5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish its equality objectives to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty so the only options are to either adopt the proposed objectives as recommended or to develop alternative objectives.

6. Financial implications

6.1 Actions to make progress on the equality objectives will be contained within existing budgets

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Adoption of the equality objectives will help the Council to meet its legal duty.

8. Consultation

8.1 The objectives have been developed from a range of data and information, including the results of a consultation exercise and survey, the views of staff and groups that the Council currently engages with in respect of equality matters as well as the general public.

8.2 Engagement and consultation has taken place through the following means:

- An on-line public survey through the Council's website
- An e-mail to all Council staff
- Targeted e-mails and direct communication with partners and equality interest groups
- Discussion at the Calderdale Equality Forum
- Discussions with Senior Council Officers and Directorate Equality Champions
- A number of partner social media platforms and E-newsletters

8.3 45 formal responses were received to the consultation with a significant majority expressing their support for the proposed objectives (see Appendix 2).

8.4 The objective: *Vulnerable communities and individuals are supported to achieve and develop safe, healthy and resilient communities* received the strongest support with 62.8% of the respondents 'agreeing strongly' with this objective.

9. Environment, Health and Economic Implications

9.1 The proposed equality objectives will make a significant contribution towards improving life chances, increasing prosperity and fostering good community relations. These impacts will be felt across all population outcomes and particularly in those designed to 'narrow the gap' between the outcomes experienced by different people because of their age, gender, disability etc.

10. Equality and Diversity

10.1 The very nature of the proposals within this report is to help advance equality. Actions to achieve the objectives will include carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on policy and service developments and procurement exercises. The Impact Assessment tool also includes a requirement to consider the staffing implications of proposed courses of action.

11. Summary and Recommendations

11.1 Calderdale Council is committed to delivering fair, inclusive and accessible services to achieve the best outcomes for the people it serves. Reducing inequality is one of the three priorities in the Council's ambition to be the Best Borough in the North.

11.2 Since 2017, and as identified in Calderdale's Equality Progress Report 2021, a significant amount of work has been done to improve the way the Council considers and responds to the needs of the local community when developing new policies or revising them; designing or reviewing services and how they are delivered. However, it is recognised that more can be done.

11.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty gives the Council further opportunity to build upon the work it has done already to demonstrate its commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity and the provision of public services that meet the needs of all local people.

11.4 The proposed equality objectives 2021-2025, once agreed, will set the future equality direction of the Council and help provide the Council with an opportunity to make further improvements.

For further information on this report, contact:

Tahira Iqbal	Principal Cohesion and Equality Officer, Communities & Service Support
Telephone:	01422 392467
E-mail:	Tahira.iqbal@calderdale.gov.uk

The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

1. EHRC Equality Act 2010 guidance
2. EHRC Public Sector Equality Duty guidance
3. Calderdale Council Equality Objectives Consultation 2021-25

The documents are available for inspection at:

Princess Building, Halifax

Calderdale Council Proposed Equality Objectives 2021-2025

Appendix 1

Council Priority	Proposed Objective	Why we feel this is a priority
Reduce Inequalities	The Council's work environment and services are accessible and capable of responding to the different and changing needs of our communities	We know that some groups and communities are under-represented as users of our services. Providing fair and easy access to Council services is an important part of meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010. As an employer we also want to design out inaccessibility in our built environment.
	Vulnerable communities and individuals are supported to achieve and develop safe, healthy and resilient communities	Many older, vulnerable or disadvantaged people can have lower levels of health and wellbeing, some as a consequence of loneliness and isolation. Vulnerable communities and individuals are more likely to experience hate crime and antisocial behaviour – investment in early intervention is key.
Grow the Economy	Economic inequalities are addressed with partners to tackle low pay and support inclusive growth	By working in partnership and co-ordinating and maximising local initiatives the Council can make a huge contribution to narrowing economic inequalities which have a huge impact on life chances and opportunities
	The Council's workforce is committed to equality and is reflective of the diverse communities it serves	A number of groups are under-represented within the Council's workforce when compared to the working age population of Calderdale, including disabled people and minority ethnic communities.
Build a Sustainable Future	Equality is promoted in partnerships, procurement and when commissioning our services.	The Council can promote and enforce its equality objectives by ensuring that its suppliers, contractors and their agents provide goods, supplies and services in a manner that does not discriminate. It can also help to influence and improve digital, housing and transport access and choices.
	The heritage and diversity of Calderdale is celebrated, and good relations are fostered between people of different backgrounds	The Calderdale population profile is changing and becoming more diverse but many people still have little knowledge or experience of people from different backgrounds. The Council plays an important role in helping people from different backgrounds (age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation etc.) to get on well together.

Equality Objectives 2021-2025 E-Survey

Results Report June 2021

Report prepared by the Customer Knowledge Team, July 2021

www.calderdale.gov.uk

Equality Objectives Consultation 2021

This report displays the simple number and percentage results of the questions asked in the Equality Objectives survey carried out in June 2021.

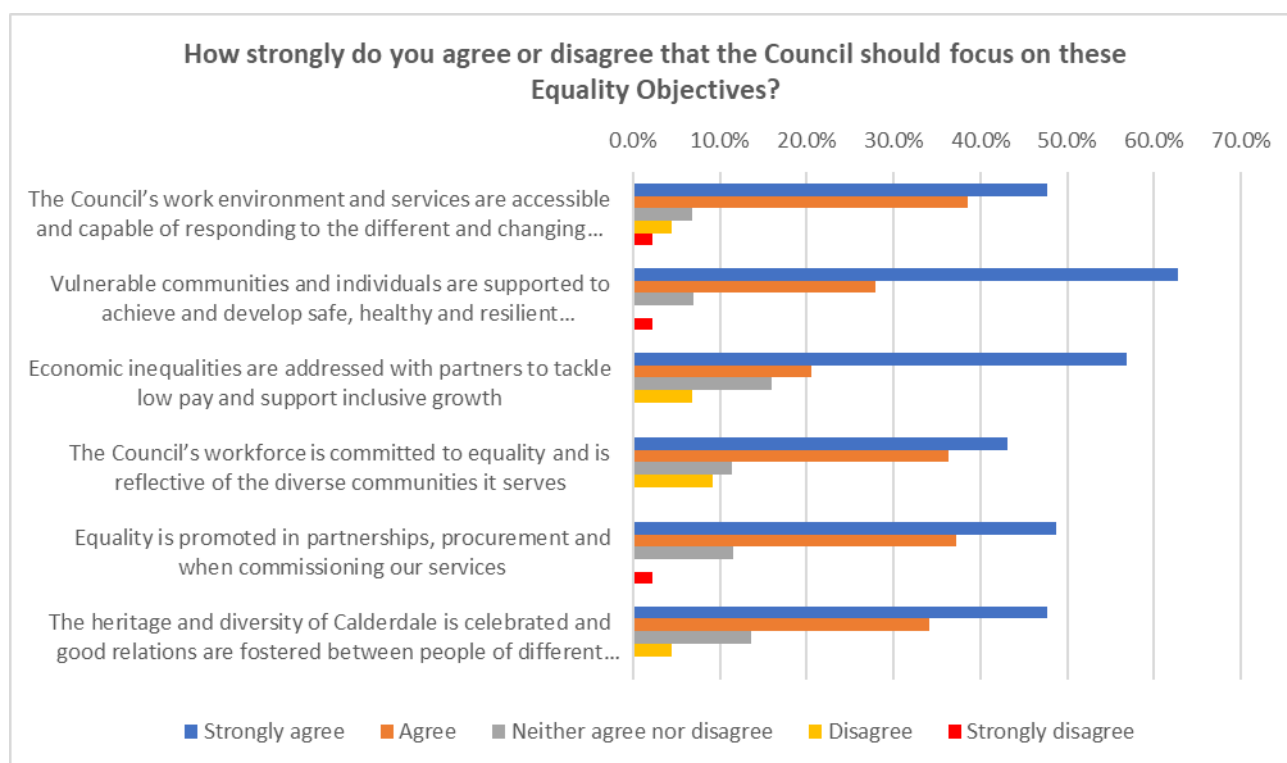
45 questionnaires were returned prior to the closing date (30.06.2021) using an online survey to members of the public and relevant groups, the data of which has been used to prepare this report.

All responses to the qualitative questions are provided ad verbatim in the body of the report.

Q1. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council should focus on the following equality objectives?

Equality Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
--------------------	----------------	-------	----------------------------	----------	-------------------

The Council's work environment and services are accessible and capable of responding to the different and changing needs of our communities.	21	17	3	2	1
	47.7%	38.6%	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%
Vulnerable communities and individuals are supported to achieve and develop safe, healthy and resilient communities.	27	12	3	-	1
	62.8%	27.9%	7.0%	-	2.3%
Economic inequalities are addressed with partners to tackle low pay and support inclusive growth.	25	9	7	3	-
	56.8%	20.5%	15.9%	6.8%	-
The Council's workforce is committed to equality and is reflective of the diverse communities it serves.	19	16	5	4	-
	43.2%	36.4%	11.4%	9.1%	-
Equality is promoted in partnerships, procurement and when commissioning our services.	21	16	5	-	1
	48.8%	37.2%	11.6%	-	2.3%
The heritage and diversity of Calderdale is celebrated, and good relations are fostered between people of different backgrounds	21	15	6	2	-
	47.7%	34.1%	13.6%	4.5%	-



Q2. Are there any alternative equality objectives that you think the Council should consider and why...

- Housing in Calderdale
- Should focus on getting more BAME workers specially in senior management

- Yes. The main equality objective would be to furnish information about how the Council is tackling these very good objectives and have independent regulation about how successful it has been for each of them.
- Would like to see more focus on unpaid carers.
- Post covid rebuild
- The language needs to change to equality diversity and inclusion
- More work needs to be done with Pan disabled groups not just one group that does not represent the community
- The council should look into the housing issue in Calderdale
- Job descriptions/ barring /Scales
- Commitment to employing a diverse leadership team and council electives

Q3. Any other comments?

- Housing to me is a big issue because I have witnessed the long waiting regarding this which is not impressive at all.
- Overall, the council is saying and showing it is doing the right thing, However, there are not as many opportunities for BAME staff to get into senior positions and also providing more resources and opportunities to BAME communities
- I think it is time we stopped hiding behind anonymous surveys and declared our support. So, my name is xxxxx and my phone number is xxxxxxxx. *(Following recognition that the survey results would be made public, it was agreed with the individual that their contact details would not be published)*
- The second objective is not clearly defined
- I think the council needs to look at its own workforce and consider why certain groups are under-represented. There remain significant barriers to work for disabled people. It is not simply about adjustments to the physical environment. I once applied for and got a job with Calderdale Council. This was 5 years ago. I did not start the job due to issues surrounding my disability and adjustments. I was not believed, and I felt very vulnerable. The job offer was withdrawn. I would not apply for a job with the Council again
- I think it is important to recognise that women are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and this will need to be addressed
- The move towards digital delivery of services puts anyone who is unable to access and use digital technology at a disadvantage. Libraries go some way towards remedying this by providing free IT access but cannot and should not be expected to assist with specialist enquiries (e.g. housing benefits, council tax, planning enquiries etc.)
- The council should provide good and affordable accommodation for people who wish to settle in Calderdale. More support should be given to migrant.
- too many disparities and not open and transparent when restructuring.
- My food bin was not collected for 3 weeks in the hot weather. There were flies/smell and I did bleach it but other people's' bins were also attracting flies and vermin. I believe the Council could do better in this area as it is obviously health hazard.

Q4. What is your postcode?

Responses to this question provided separately for data protection purposes.

Q5. What is your sex?

	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
Frequency	11	33	-
Percent	25.0%	75.0%	-

Base = 44

Q6. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

	No	Yes	Prefer not to say
Frequency	1	42	1
Percent	2.3%	95.5%	2.3%

Base = 44

Q7. What is your age?

Responses to this question provided separately for analysis purposes.

Q8. What is your sexual orientation (who are you attracted to)?

	Frequency	Percent
Straight/ Heterosexual (a man attracted to a woman, or a woman attracted to a man)	35	83.3%
Gay (a man attracted to another man)	-	-
Lesbian (a woman attracted to another woman)	2	4.8%
Bisexual (a man attracted to both a man and a woman or a woman attracted to both a man and a woman)	2	4.8%
Prefer not to say	3	7.1%

Base = 42

Q8a. Other, please say...

Asexual

Q9. What is your religious belief?

	Christian	Muslim	Jewish	Hindu	Buddhist	Sikh	None	Prefer not to say
Frequency	20	3	1	-	1	1	12	4
Percent	47.6%	7.1%	2.4%	-	2.4%	2.4%	28.6%	9.5%

Base = 42

Q10. What is your ethnic origin?

	White	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ Black British / Caribbean or African	Prefer not to say
Frequency	35	1	4	3	1
Percent	79.5%	2.3%	9.1%	6.8%	2.3%

Base = 44

Q10a. Other ethnic group...

No responses

Q11. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Frequency	14	29	1
Percent	31.8%	65.9%	2.3%

Base = 44