

Worcester City Council

Equality & Inclusion

Strategy

2013

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our revised Equality and Inclusion Strategy. This Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion while celebrating the diversity within our communities.

The new strategy replaces our existing Race, Disability and Gender equality schemes and our Equality Scheme.

The Strategy sets out our continuing commitment to promote equality of opportunity; ensure equality and inclusion is firmly embedded into our decision-making processes; and to lead by example. Our aspiration for Worcester City Council is to be an accessible and inclusive organisation, where everyone feels valued and has equal and fair access to local services.

Our responsibility is not only to listen to the needs of local people in ensuring they get the services they need. As a major employer, we also have a responsibility to make a real and positive difference to all who work, live and visit Worcester City. This strategy sets out how we intend to do that.

Foreword by Lucy Hodgson, Cabinet Member for Customer Service and Communications

1. Inclusion and Equality in Worcester City Council

Our Equality and Inclusion Strategy aspires to make a difference to the lives of people in Worcester City by improving services and opportunities for people from different sections of the community. It demonstrates our continuing commitment to promote equality of opportunity for the communities we serve and for all who work for us.

As a service provider and major employer, the Council is committed to promoting equality and tackling social exclusion and, as such, will integrate equality into all activities, having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and
- Promote good relations between all groups

The above also applies to the role the Council has as a commissioner and procurer of goods and services.

2. Our Inclusion Strategy serves the following aims:

- Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 which harmonises our existing race, disability and gender equality schemes and incorporation of all the responsibilities we must meet as both an employer and a service provider
- Replacement of the existing schemes with a single strategy approach to cover the wider **protected characteristics** which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Provision of an action plan, which details what we will do to ensure that our diverse range of customers are at the heart of everything we do and measure our progress in achieving that aim.
- Making a real and positive difference to all those who work in, live in and visit Worcester City
- The recruitment, development and retention of a workforce which better reflects the diversity of the local community, respects differences so that everybody feels valued and ensures that everyone is treated with dignity.

3. The Place

Worcester City Council provides essential services for over 95,000 residents. The city is also the focus for a wider population of over a quarter of a million people. Working with the local community we aim to create a prosperous city and to improve the quality of life for everyone. Providing accessible, efficient and best value services are at the heart of everything we do. We are constantly striving to meet the demands and expectations of our citizens and customers.

4. Leadership and Governance

The Members of Worcester City Council have overall responsibility for the implementation of this Strategy and compliance. This responsibility is delegated to the **Managing Director** who will ensure that the appropriate resources are dedicated to ensuring that equality and inclusion is “in everything we do.”

The Corporate Management Team is responsible for championing equality and inclusion and ensuring that the Service Area Managers understand their role in implementing this strategy.

Service Area Managers are responsible for incorporating equality and inclusion into their service improvement plans and ensuring that their staff understand the contents of this Strategy and the role they play in its implementation.

The Service Area Manager for Performance Improvement Efficiency (PIE) is responsible for overall co-ordination, advice and monitoring.

5. What Equality and Inclusion means

Service Delivery

Our vision is for a council which “Puts Customers First” when developing and delivering local services by engaging with local people to ensure they get the services they need and can influence and shape the way we work.

Our Strategy centres on these Equality priorities, which are reflected in our Corporate Plan, both in our priority of Customer Care and Communications and our cross cutting theme of "Putting Customers First". We will:

- Respect and value staff, customers, councillors and partners so that they are treated with dignity and respect;
- Engage effectively with our communities so that people can influence decisions that affect their lives;
- Empower people in their communities to shape and tackle local issues;
- Ensure services are centred on meeting the needs of our customers;
- Promote fair pay and equal access to employment and learning and development opportunities; and
- Build a clear picture of local need based on what local people have told us and what we know about our customers.

Employment

Our staff are crucial to everything we will do. For us, this means:

- Providing clear and positive leadership – to maximise the service benefits of a diverse workforce delivering service to a diverse customer base;
- Providing consistent and effective people management – where managers are equipped to get the best out of the individuals they manage;
- Providing support for all staff – so that everyone feels confident to be themselves, feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect;
- Recruiting, developing and retaining people so that we reflect the communities that we serve.

We have published 'Our Values' that shape the way we want to work. For the individual staff member this means taking responsibility for implementing the values in everything they do. These values should shape the way we work and the services we provide. The four principles which guide our work are:

- We deliver the results people want
- We operate as one council
- We challenge each other to improve the organisation
- We empower individuals and teams to make accountable decisions.

We therefore expect all staff working for us to adopt the following behaviours.

I expect to be	I will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected and included as a valued member of staff • Able to contribute at work to the best of my ability • Encouraged to develop my capabilities and strive towards my potential • Appreciated for the work I do • Able to raise concerns about issues that I feel are important and confident that they will be properly considered • Treated fairly and not limited by others assumptions about me • Able to strike a work-life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to other people and seek to understand • Lead by example to promote inclusion and equality at work • Recognise the needs of others and treat them with dignity, respect and consideration • Take action and ownership to make others feel included and valued • Keep an open mind to different ways of thinking and doing things • Develop my skills and knowledge to maximise my potential and the contribution I can make at work • Challenge behaviours that I feel are not in line with our values and show zero tolerance towards bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour

Impact Assessment

We will undertake Impact Assessments for measuring the effect of policies and practices. This is an opportunity to promote inclusive service delivery to all our communities and employment practices that help us to deliver accessible services which meet the varied needs of individuals - now and in the future. These will be published on our website.

Performance Monitoring

Progress against the Service Priorities which are detailed in the Corporate Plan will be reported regularly to Councillors, the Council's Management Team and our customers.

Our Corporate Plan is reviewed annually, a process which involves consultation with local people, businesses, our customers and other stakeholders.

How Equality and Inclusion improves performance

