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| Name of Committee: | Human Resources Committee | | |
| Committee Date: | 4 October 2023 | | |
| Report Title: | Equality Policy Review | | |
| Responsible Officer: | Matt Goodwin, Executive Head of Internal Services | | |
| Cabinet Lead: | Councillor Neil Bowdell | | |
| Status: | Non-Exempt | | |
| Urgent Decision: | No | Key Decision: | No |
| Appendices: | Reviewed and updated Equality Policy | | |
| Background Papers: | The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty Employment: Statutory Code of Practice Equality and Human Rights Commission | | |
| Officer Contact: | Name: Caren Ransom, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Advisor Email: caren.ransom@havant.gov.uk | | |
| Report Number: | HBC/ | | |

Corporate Priorities:

People First: This policy is designed to ensure positive impacts for all people, across everything we do. It also reinforces positive well-being for all people.

One Borough: This policy covers all people across our Borough.

One Team: This policy covers all our workforce and Councillors.

Executive Summary:

This is a three-yearly review of the current Equality Policy. Consultation has taken place during the summer with key identified stakeholders.

There have only been minor amendments made to the current policy which reflects duties placed upon the Council under the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendations:

Members of this Committee are requested to approve the revised Equality Policy 2023.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is about a review and update of Havant Borough Council's Equality Policy.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council adopted its first Equality Policy in 2006/07. This is a key organisation policy. Law and, therefore this policy, has since evolved. Specifically, the rollout of the Equality Act 2010 in 2011/12 and onwards. Specific duties were added in 2017/18 which included Gender Pay Gap analysis and reporting.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous anti-discrimination laws, such as the Sex/Disability and Race Discrimination Acts. The Equality Act 2010 encompasses all past legislation into one law and identified nine protected characteristics (or groups) that are protected from unlawful discrimination.
- 2.3 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2.4 The Equality Act 2010 (section 149) places a proactive duty on the public sector. This is called the Public Sector Equality Duty. The duty has three aims as outlined in the Equality Policy.
- 2.5 To enable the council to discharge this duty and work proactively towards its community and workforce, a framework needs to be in place, such as this policy and subsequent action plan.
- 2.6 The council's governance and good practice is to review policies every three years. Hence, reviewing this in 2023.
- 2.7 The review proved only minor elements of change, such as a transfer to the new policy template and minor amendments to terminology and language in places.
- 2.8 The policy reflects the Public Sector Equality Duty in how we provide services, buy goods and services, employ people, work in partnership and through our role in community leadership.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 The HR Committee could choose to approve the amendment or seek further changes to this policy.

4.0 Relationship to the Corporate Strategy

- 4.1 People First: This policy is designed to ensure positive impacts for all people, across everything we do. It also reinforces positive well-being for all people.
- 4.2 One Borough: This policy covers all people across our Borough.
- 4.3 One Team: This policy covers all our workforce and Councillors.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This policy will enable the Council to embed equality and diversity into the organisation, highlighting and promoting a real commitment to our people and keeping us legally on track.
- 5.2 This is a proactive policy that should embed equality into every aspect of Council business, people and workforce. This will also help support the Council to discharge the Public Sector Equality Duty through a supporting action plan. That action plan will be reviewed by this Committee annually.

6.0 Implications and Comments

- 6.1 S151 Comments: Whilst this policy has no immediate and direct financial impact, failure to have an appropriate, correct and up-to-date equality policy could increase the risk of negative financial impacts and costs in the future. The high cost of successful equal pay claims on local authorities has been all too well evident in recent weeks.
- 6.2 Financial Implications: See S151 comments - no immediate and direct financial impact.
- 6.3 Monitoring Officer Comments: The adoption of new policy aims in respect of the Council's HR function is within the remit of the Human Resources Committee. The Human Resources Committee may approve the minor amendments to this important policy.

- 6.4 Legal Implications: There are no Legal implications associated with this update.
- 6.5 Equality and Diversity: This policy ensures we adhere to relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 6.6 Human Resources: This has been discussed and developed with support from the HR team. No specific implications, as the policy differs minimally from the existing version.
- 6.7 Information Governance: No Information Governance impact associated with this update.
- 6.8 Climate and Environment: No Climate and Environment impact associated with this update.

7.0 Risks

- 7.1 The council has an ongoing risk of complaints or grievances being made relating to equality. However, having a robust policy and action plan, including training, where appropriate, mitigates this risk significantly. This policy will also help reduce any enforcement action against it regarding the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8.0 Consultation

- 8.1 Consultees (beginning July 2023):
 - 8.1.1 HR
 - 8.1.2 Procurement
 - 8.1.3 Insight
 - 8.1.4 Democratic
 - 8.1.5 Complaints (Customer Service Client Manager)
 - 8.1.6 Unison
 - 8.1.7 Health and Safety
 - 8.1.8 Risk Management
 - 8.1.9 Diversity and Wellbeing Group
 - 8.1.10 ELT (23/08/23)

9.0 Communications

9.1 If approved, this policy will be communicated widely using a variety of platforms including the staff intranet and Councillor Hub.

| Agreed and signed off by: | | Date: |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Cabinet Lead: | Councillor Neil Bowdell | 22/09/2023 |
| Executive Head: | Matt Goodwin | 22/09/2023 |
| Monitoring Officer: | Jo McIntosh | 25/09/2023 |
| Section151 Officer: | Steven Pink | 25/09/2023 |