

Responses to consultation on draft Corporate Equalities Scheme 2016 - 2020

Organisation	Comment(s)	Proposed action
Liz Haggart, Chief Officer, Age UK Sheppey	<p>Thank you and Cllr Wilcox for coming to Sheerness today. As requested please find attached a copy of the data we talked about. You asked for some comments in writing.</p> <p>Looking at the data for people with disabilities at ward level shows quite starkly the acute levels of disability on the Isle of Sheppey and in particular amongst older people. I believe that the number of older people on Sheppey represents almost one half of older people with disabilities in Swale. As I mentioned to you, according to DWP data in 2014 about 70% of older people in Sheerness East and West were claiming some form of disability benefit and 46% in Leysdown and Warden. These are very high levels relative to the County average. The level of disadvantage on Sheppey is the key factor in the Borough's relatively high level as a whole so I would therefore suggest that your strategy looks to see if these areas of acute disadvantage can be acknowledged. I also hope that this can be reflected in your proposed actions.</p> <p>I hope this is helpful. If you require any further input from me please do not hesitate to ask.</p>	<p>Agreed. A reference has been included in the background section of Objective 2, and a table has been added to Appendix I of the Scheme showing the proportion of residents aged over 50 in each ward who consider they have a long term health problem or disability.</p> <p>We will consider further what targeted action can be put in place to address this.</p>
Trish Codrington, Clerk, Minster-on-Sea Parish Council	<p>Do you support the four Equality Objectives listed in the draft scheme? - Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other Equality Objectives which you think should be incorporated into the scheme? - No.</p> <p>Do you support the key actions listed in the draft scheme? - Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other key actions you think should be incorporated into the scheme? - No.</p> <p>Do you have any other comments on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme? - Well done!</p>	Noted.

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Sheldwich, Baddlesmere and Leaveland Parish Council	<p>Do you support the four Equality Objectives listed in the draft scheme? - Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other Equality Objectives which you think should be incorporated into the scheme? - No.</p> <p>Do you support the key actions listed in the draft scheme? - Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other key actions you think should be incorporated into the scheme? - No.</p>	Noted.
Cllr Peter Finch, Member of Teynham Parish Council	<p>Do you support the four Equality Objectives listed in the draft Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other Equality Objectives which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>If yes, please describe them: Make sure any detailed proposals are deliverable at Parish Council level and funds are made available.</p> <p>Do you support the key actions listed in the draft scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other key actions which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>If yes, please describe them: Target improvements to access arrangements for elderly and disabled people. Make SCB information available in foreign languages.</p>	Noted. Objective 3 already describes how the Council is improving its customer care and providing a choice of access arrangements to our services. In addition, Objective 2 is focussed on supporting Swale’s most vulnerable residents.
Robert Anglin	<p>Do you support the four Equality Objectives listed in the draft Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other Equality Objectives which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? - No.</p> <p>Do you support the key actions listed in the draft scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other key actions which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>If yes, please describe them: There is no overtly advertised specific point of contact for equality issues. A person moving to Swale would be hard pushed to quickly find a person to speak to if needed.</p>	Noted. This will be rectified when the new Corporate Equality Scheme is published.

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	<p>Do you have any other comments on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme? There is some very useful statistical information in the report. However, the report does not indicate how well the council performed under the last equality scheme.</p> <p>The equality scheme suggests that equality will be underpinned throughout the Borough but does not say how it will and in what way specifically. Half a page of case studies to show what Swale has done or is going to do moving forward would distinguish this report as a proactive tool rather than a document designed to tick a box.</p>	<p>Agreed. A summary of what has been achieved under the previous Scheme has been incorporated into the report to Cabinet and Council seeking endorsement/ approval of the new Scheme.</p> <p>Noted. Delivery of the key actions in the scheme listed under each of the four objectives will be incorporated into each Department's Service Plan. See also the response to comments from Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council below.</p>
<p>Stephanie Curtis, Safer and Stronger Communities Officer, Swale BC</p>	<p>As briefly discussed earlier, there were just a few points I wanted to input into the consultation.</p> <p>Reference Objective 1 and the implementation of the Prevent Action Plan - I would be inclined to remove this as the action plan was due for completion at the end of the last financial year. Ongoing work to tackle the Prevent agenda is just part of the wider Community Safety Partnership work, so would be covered by the bullet point above.</p> <p>Reference Objective 2 - I would suggest the removal of the last action point in relation to SATEDA and replace with the below, as a large element of the work of the CSP is identifying and supporting vulnerable victims, over and above the domestic abuse agenda:</p> <p><i>'through the work of the Community Safety Partnership seek to identify and support vulnerable victims of crime and ASB, focusing on those issues and</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p> <p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p>

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	<i>vulnerable groups as identified in the annual Community Safety strategic assessment'.</i>	
Teynham Parish Council	<p>Cllr Whiting fed back from a meeting of Teynham Parish Council which was considering the draft Scheme as part of the agenda.</p> <p>The members of Teynham Parish Council, while welcoming most aspects of the draft Scheme, were disappointed to note that it made no reference to parish or town councils.</p>	Scheme amended to refer to parish and town councils as one of the Council's key partners.
Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council	<p>Do you support the four Equality Objectives listed in the draft Scheme? -Yes.</p> <p>Are there any other Equality Objectives which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>If yes, please describe them: See below</p> <p>Do you support the key actions listed in the draft scheme? Yes</p> <p>Are there any other key actions which you think should be incorporated into the Scheme? – Yes.</p> <p>If yes, please describe them: See below</p> <p>Do you have any other comments on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme? Overall I thought the document was ok but lacked vision in terms of the impact it would have on Swale - what will success look like - and in the activities under the objectives it wasn't clear on how these would improve equality - some were fairly generic.</p> <p>No mention of an evaluation strategy and most statements would be difficult to monitor any change as there are no targets for improvement. This means we won't be able to tell whether the scheme had any impact over its lifetime and they won't be able to prioritise resources on areas that need improving. How will Swale assess activities/ spend for compliance with the Act?</p> <p>I also felt it could do a bit more to set out how the council will take proactive action to improve issues in Swale that fall below standards set out in the Equality Act - either at objective level or for specific cases.</p>	<p>Noted and Scheme amended where appropriate.</p> <p>The key actions will be embedded in Departmental Service Plans. Delivery of these actions will be monitored on a monthly basis in accordance with the Council's long-established arrangements. These monthly reports are published on the Council's website.</p>

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	<p>On specific sections: Page 7. I would expect a change in the priorities as stated so that they have a specific objective in the corporate plan on equality</p> <p>On the four objectives set out on page 9, I would expect to see something on how they will proactively tackle discrimination when they come across it in any area of activity. On page 10 would be useful for an explanation of how key actions will specifically contribute to equality - most are fairly generic. On objectives 1 and 2, how will they promote economic inclusion for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, and also could have a more general comment committing to ensure all council services will comply with the Equality Act.</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan is set for a three year period, but is 'refreshed' on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date. The question of whether there should be a specific equality objective will be considered as part of the next 'refresh'.</p> <p>The four equality objectives in the Scheme are designed to encapsulate the broad direction the Council will take.</p>
Policy Development and Review Committee	<p>Agree that the four objectives are the right ones.</p> <p>Foreword – do human rights form part of the Equality Act?</p> <p>Objective 1 - Amend one of the actions to reflect that the Council will not only support community-led projects and initiatives which encourage communities themselves to work together to solve issues locally, but that they will actively promote these too.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>No – but the reference to human rights is intended to underline that the Council places a great deal of importance on our residents and communities, whatever their backgrounds.</p> <p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p>

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	<p>Objective 2 - The ten year difference in life expectancy across the Borough needed to be addressed.</p> <p>Amend one of the actions to 'supporting households with the greatest housing needs to access affordable housing'.</p> <p>Objective 3 – That the Council be more proactive in promoting the availability of Council documents in alternative formats.</p> <p>Amend one of the actions include the word 'fairness'.</p> <p>General – The Committee praised the content of the Scheme, including the comprehensive statistics in Appendices I and II.</p>	<p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p> <p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p> <p>Agreed. A more overt reference to the availability of documents in alternative formats has been incorporated.</p> <p>Agreed. Scheme amended accordingly.</p> <p>Noted.</p>