

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Gary Cooke

Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services

DECISION NO:

16/00136

For publication**Key decision: YES**

The decision will be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions.

Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives 2016-2020

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, I propose to take a decision to approve The Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives 2016-2020.

Reason for decision:

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In October 2011 the Government Equality Office (GEO) issued guidance on what public bodies are expected to publish in order to show how they meet the Duty. The guidance states that public bodies:

- Must publish their first equality objectives by 6 April 2012, with subsequent objectives published at least every four years
- Must decide how many equality objectives it should set and what they should be
- Objectives should take into account evidence of equality issues across all of the authority's functions, consider issues affecting people sharing each protected characteristic, and take into account the three aims of the Duty.

The Equality & Human Rights Policy meets the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty and supporting guidance.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Equality & Human Rights Policy will be considered by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 2 December 2016.

The Equality & Human Rights Policy has been consulted on recommendations included:

- A simple and clear policy framework that is accessible to everybody-We have developed an easy read version of the policy and it has been proposed that the widely published version of the policy and objectives should be in “Easy Read” supported by a more detailed policy.
- Where possible we have stated which characteristics each objective seeks to address
- We have included contractors, procured and commissioned services in the section on accountability and have clarified our expectations in relation to the equality duty.
- We have made the policy clearer and have an entire section on accountability.
- We have developed equality objectives that are based on our understanding of the equality priorities in services
- We have acknowledged the role the voluntary sector and the wider community plays in fostering good relations.
- We have included an equality objective that addresses the mental health needs of specific groups.

Any alternatives considered and rejected

The Equality & Human Rights Policy and Objectives replaces Kent County Councils’ Equality Policy and Objectives.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date