Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 9**

Finance and Resources Committee

20 May 2025

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the proposed updates to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

Recommendation

2. That Members approve the revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, as outlined in **Appendix A**.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework;
    - Corporate Action Plan Objective 31: Ensure that we have HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the work of the Authority effectively.

Background

4. The EDI policy was last reviewed in 2020. Regular updates ensure its continued relevance, compliance with evolving legal and social expectations, and alignment with best practice for creating an inclusive workplace.

5. A draft version of the revised policy was reviewed by Josie Hastings, the Authority's EDI training facilitator, whose recommendations were incorporated. The policy was subsequently shared with the EDI Working Group (including the Member Champion for Corporate Management), UNISON representatives and the Senior Management Team for further feedback and refinement.

Proposed changes

6. The revisions aim to:
    - Improve clarity for all stakeholders by expanding the definitions section, particularly for those unfamiliar with EDI terminology;
    - Strengthening the Authority's commitment to EDI; and
    - Maintain a consistent and impactful tone, reinforcing a shared sense of responsibility.

Financial Implications

7. None.

Legal Implications

8. The proposed amendments ensure alignment with legal requirements.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

9. The revised policy promotes a culture of respect and inclusion within the workplace.

Conclusion

10. The updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy strengthens the Authority's commitment to inclusivity and positions it as an employer that values diversity, ensuring a respectful and equitable workforce.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

Appendix A

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority values diversity; recognising the strengths it brings to our communities and workforce. By fostering an inclusive culture, we enable a broader range of perspectives, experiences and skills, creating a positive and productive working environment for all.

1.2 This policy sets out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, harassment and intimidation, and addressing disadvantage. Our goal is to ensure everyone has the opportunity to succeed and to uphold the highest standards in service delivery, decision-making and employment practices.

2. Scope and status of this policy

2.1 This policy applies both to the Authority's role as an employer and to the provision of our services to the public. It applies to all staff, volunteers, Members, contractors, agency workers and any other individuals engaged to work with the Authority. It also extends to job applicants and covers all stages of the employment relationship.

2.2 This policy sets out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. While it does not form part of any employment or service contract, the Authority expects compliance and may amend it at any time.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Equality** means ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. It is based on the principle that no one should face barriers due to their background, beliefs, disability or circumstances.

3.2 **Diversity** refers to the unique perspectives, experiences and attributes individuals bring to a community or organisation. This includes factors such as cognitive skills, personality traits and protected characteristics.

3.3 **Inclusion** means creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued and respected fostering a sense of belonging within the organisation.

3.4 The **Equality Act 2010** safeguards individuals from discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of services based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3.5 The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (PSED) places a legal responsibility on the Authority to actively consider how its policies and decisions affect people with protected characteristics who are service users.

3.6 **Equality Impact Assessments** (EqIAs) are used by the Authority to systematically identify and assess the impact of its policies, projects and services on people with protected characteristics. EqIAs help us to address any potential negative impacts and ensure our work is inclusive.

4. The Authority's commitment

4.1 The Authority is committed to fostering a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion., which enhances wellbeing and enables individuals to thrive by being their authentic selves.

4.2 The Authority's core values guide its mission, service delivery and strategic goals:

- **Improvement**: we will continually strive to improve our performance in delivering National Park purposes.
- **Accountability**: we will explain and take responsibility for our decisions and
- actions.
- **Commitment**: We will do what we say we will do.
- **Integrity**: All our relationships will be built on honesty, respect, transparency, equality and impartiality.
- **Open and Approachable**: We will be open to new ways of doing things, and will work positively with others to achieve our objectives in ways that help them meet theirs.
- **Valuing and Empowering Our People**: We value the people who work for us and will ensure that they are equipped, supported and empowered to provide professional services to the public.

4.3 Equality of opportunity does not always mean treating everyone the same. We recognise that adjustments may be necessary to ensure fair access to services and employment. For example, the Authority may provide information in alternative formats or make reasonable adjustments to accommodate individual needs.

4.4 We will deliver on our commitment through:

- **Inclusive policy and service design**. Welcoming ideas, comments, and suggestions to ensure that policies and services are accessible and meet diverse needs.

- **Evidence-based decision making**. Integrating equality, diversity and inclusion principles into policies, decisions and processes, using consultation and engagement to gather relevant evidence.

- **Equality impact assessments (EqIAs).** Conducting EqIAs (as required by the PSED) rigorously and proactively to assess the impact of policies, resource allocation and key decisions.

- **Accountability and transparency**. Setting and publishing measurable equality, diversity and inclusion targets and reporting on performance through mainstream corporate planning processes.

- **Workforce diversity monitoring**. Collecting and reviewing data about the Authority's workforce and job applicants, in order to identify any trends or potential areas of concern.

- **Supplier and contractor expectations.** Requiring all contractors and service providers to comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Fostering an inclusive environment.** Recognising and valuing the contributions of all staff, volunteers, Members and stakeholders in a diverse and supported workplace.
- **Commitment to dignity and respect.** Maintaining a workplace free from intimidation, bullying and harassment and protecting staff from victimisation. Ensuring equal access to training and career progression, and regularly reviewing employment practices for fairness.

5. Expectations

5.1 **Personal responsibility**. All staff, volunteers, Members, contractors and agency workers are responsible for applying this policy in their work. We expect them to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and contribute to a welcoming inclusive workplace culture.

5.2 **Respect and fair treatment.** Everyone, should be treated with dignity, trust and respect. This includes listening to diverse perspectives and fostering an environment where everyone feels valued.

5.3 **Challenging inappropriate behaviour**. We empower staff to challenge exclusionary practices, comments or behaviours. We encourage constructive and respectful dialogue to address and rectify any actions that undermine our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

5.4 **Commitment to Equal Access.** We are dedicated to ensuring equal access to the National Park's opportunities and resources for all. We strive to go beyond the minimum legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to actively reduce disadvantage and promote inclusivity in public engagement.

6. Equality, diversity and inclusion in employment

6.1 We recognise that promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in employment is both a legal and ethical responsibility and a key element of effective management.

6.2 The Authority is dedicated to ensuring a fair and respectful treatment for all staff. Opportunities for recruitment, promotion and training will be based solely on aptitude and ability. We are committed to supporting staff development, ensuring that everyone can reach their full potential and that we can benefit from a diverse and talented workforce.

7. Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy, report discrimination, and challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Managers are responsible for implementing, monitoring and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion principles in service provision and employment.

Senior Management Team (SMT) will ensure that corporate and service planning includes specific equality objectives and provides leadership on implementation.

Members are responsible for upholding fairness and equality in decision-making.

Trade unions are recognised as key partners in promoting and ensuring adherence to this policy

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) is a cross-Authority working group responsible for reviewing and developing Authority policies and procedures and making recommendations to SMT to ensure that the Authority provides a fair and equally accessible service to all.

8. Addressing concerns and complaints

8.1 The Authority acknowledges that we cannot get everything right all the time. Mistakes can happen, often unintentionally. We welcome feedback to help us improve and encourage individuals to raise concerns. Feedback can be directed to the Head of HR, who is the lead officer for this policy.

8.2 The Authority respects individuals' right to formally register complaints or concerns and is committed to ensuring that such matters are handled promptly, fairly and effectively under the appropriate policy. Depending on the nature of the issue, concerns may be addressed through:

- **Complaints policy**, for general feedback or complaints about the Authority's services, policies or staff.
- **Grievance procedure**, for concerns raised by staff regarding workplace treatment or employment matters.
- **Local Assessment Procedure**, for complaints relating to the conduct of Authority Members.
- **Trade union support**, staff may seek guidance from UNISON, the recognised trade union.

8.3 Assistance is available for those who may require documents in alternative formats or additional support in understanding them.