Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 10**

Finance and Resources Committee

17 December 2024

Annual Report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion matters.

Recommendation

2. That the report be noted.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

    - Corporate Action Plan Objective 33

    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 Equality Act 2010 is a cross-cutting legislative framework which replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act.

5. The Act simplified and strengthened the previous legislation and removed inconsistencies; delivering a modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. This makes the law easier for individuals and organisations to understand and comply with.

6. The Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

Responsibilities

7. The Public Sector Equality Duty came into force on 5 April 2011, and this section of the Act specifically relates to the duties for local authorities.

8. The Authority must not treat people unfairly because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership. These are called "protected characteristics".

9. As a local authority we must:
    - have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination;
    - advance equality of opportunity; and
    - foster good relations between different people when carrying out our activities.

Equality Duty

10. To demonstrate our compliance with the duty, the following information is prepared and published annually:

i) Equality Statement
The draft Statement is considered first by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, before being present to SMT for approval prior to publication.
The Equality Statement was published in November 2024 and can be viewed at the following link https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2024/11/EDI-Statement-2024.pdf

ii) Equality Objectives.
We fulfil this by publishing our corporate planning objectives - Management Plan and Corporate Plan - annually and highlighting the corporate planning considerations in the Equality Statement.

iii) Workforce Data Report
A statutory requirement for local authorities employing more than 150 people, the most recent Workforce Data Report is based on employee data available on 31 March 2024 and can be viewed at the following link https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2024/11/202324-workforce-data.pdf

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

11. The Group was established to guide the Authority on equality, diversity and inclusion matters and meets twice a year, usually in April and September. The Group includes a representative from each Section and the Member Champion for Corporate Management, to help ensure the equality message is integrated into the day-to-day business of the Authority.

12. The most recent meeting of the Group was held on 24 September 2024 to consider the Annual Equality Statement plus other related items and issues. A member of staff was also invited to attend the meeting to talk about her lived experience as the parent of a disabled child. She outlined the balances of positives and negatives in the life of her family, including her daughter, who has Down Syndrome.

13. During the last 12 months the group has arranged for a dedicated webpage to be created to showcase the equality, diversity and inclusion related work and activities that take place within the Authority. The webpage can be accessed here https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/park-authority/our-service-to-you/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/. The webpage also includes a short film that has been recently created, to promote the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion and the Authority's commitment.

Equality Impact Assessments

14. A list of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) received by the Monitoring Officer over the last three years is as follows:

2022	**2023**	**2024**
Budget	Budget	Budget
Education & Engagement Strategy	Green Lanes Management	Cross Keys Bridge Project
	Local Plan	Card only payments at Car Parks
		Co-option of Young Members
		Market Rate Supplement for Senior Planning Officers

Training

15. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness sessions, were delivered by Josie Hastings and Associates during 2023/24, 2 sessions were arranged for both staff that have recently joined the Authority and staff unable to attend the training last year. Members were also invited to attend and joined the sessions. Training sessions will continue to be delivered on an annual basis.

Financial Implications

16. None. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work and progress is delivered within the allocated budget.

Legal Implications

17. Applicable changes and updates to the related legislation are applied to the relevant HR policies and, processes and practices, to ensure the Authority is compliant.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

18. None.

Conclusion

19. The Authority is committed to the delivery of the Equality Duty as demonstrated in the Equality Statement and will continue to set Corporate Plan targets which provide challenging goals and include consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and to monitor and publish information on performance against those targets.

Vikki Thomas
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