

Adoption of Somerset Anti-Racism Statement

Executive Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing Portfolio Cllr Adam Dance, Equalities
Strategic Director:	Jan Gamon, Place and Recovery
Service Manager:	Peter Paddon, Acting Director, Place and Recovery
Lead Officer:	Dave Crisfield, Communities Specialist, Place and Recovery
Contact Details:	david.crisfield@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462462

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek adoption of the joint Somerset Public Sector anti-racism statement.

Public Interest

2. The adoption of the Anti-Racism Statement further promotes the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and meeting its equality duties to the public, customers, contractors/suppliers and staff in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendations

3. That Full Council agree to the adoption of the joint Somerset Public Sector anti-racism statement as detailed at Appendix 1.

Background

4. At its meeting on the 12th May 2022, District Executive Committee resolved to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Somerset Council anti-racism statement.

Legislative Background

Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector service providers are prohibited from discriminating against, harassing or victimising protected classes of people (the nine Protected Characteristics). In addition, the Act requires public sector service providers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

The nine Protected Characteristics are as follows

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Age | • Marriage and Civil Partnership | • Race |
| • Disability | • Pregnancy and Maternity | • Religion or Belief |
| • Gender Reassignment | | • Sex |
| | | • Sexual Orientation |



South Somerset District Council

In addition to the Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is placed on all public bodies and others carrying out public functions to ensure they tackle discrimination and inequality, and contribute to making society fairer.

This equality duty is in addition to the statutory prohibitions against discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and also covers the same protected characteristics

When performing their functions, public bodies have a general duty to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- i. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- ii. advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and
- iii. foster good relations between people from different groups

Having 'due regard' requires us to consider the above three requirements when exercising our functions, for example, in the provision of services, including the need to:

- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- b) meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and
- c) encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Anti-Racism Statement

5. In preparation for the new Somerset Council, a simple anti-racism statement has been drafted to be adopted by the current councils in Somerset, and other public sector bodies. The statement for consideration can be found at Appendix 1.

To date the Statement has been adopted by Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor DC; Mendip DC; Yeovil Hospital Healthcare Trust, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

Adoption of the statement will

- Demonstrate our ongoing commitment to work together with partners on a collective responsibility to equality.
- Signal a clear response to the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement and provide clear evidence of our support to both our staff and elected members who share
- The protected characteristic of Race and to the wider Black and Minority Ethnic communities of South Somerset.
- Demonstrate our ongoing commitment to the PSED.
- Furthermore, adoption at this stage communicates our collective preparedness for the new Somerset Council. It is the shared view of the Somerset Equality Officers Group that waiting for the arrival of the new authority before an Anti-Racism Statement is adopted could delay this process for anything up to 18 months

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications for the adoption of the anti-racism statement

Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

7. The 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty cover the contents of this report.

Council Plan Implications

8. Equalities considerations cut across all council business where the impacts of decisions may have a negative effect on residents, staff and members. The subject of this report is, therefore, aligned with and underpins all five priorities that comprise the 2022-23 Corporate Plan Action Plan.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

9. An Environmental Assessment Form has been completed There are no Carbon Emission or Climate Change Implications as a consequence of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes / No
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	Yes / No
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
The Equality Impact Relevance Check Form is attached to this report at Appendix 2	

Privacy Impact Assessment

- 10.No Privacy Impacts arising from this report

Background Papers

- District Executive Report 12th May 2022 – Equality Update