

Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: N/A

Decision Date – 21st August 2023

Key Decision – no



Equality Frame Work for Local Government Self Assessment Report

Executive Member(s): Cllr Adam Dance, Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity and Cllr Theo Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Alyn Jones, Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities

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Summary / Background

1. In October Somerset Council will be taking part in a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge on the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). This is a nationally recognised audit process to establish areas of improvement and good practice in a Local Authorities equality practice. The Peer Challenge will consist of two days of Peer Challenge interviews and a final day of feedback. To support this process the Local Authority, requesting the Peer Challenge must complete a Self-Assessment on how it thinks it is performing.
2. Over the last 3 months the council has been completing this Self-Assessment report for submission. It has also been gathering supporting information and documents to be sent to the Peers on the 1st September 2023.

Recommendations

3. The Lead Members agree
 - a. That the Self-Assessment and supporting documents can be shared with the Local Government Association
 - b. That the Self-Assessment can be shared with those attending a Peer Challenge interview for their context.

Reasons for recommendations

4. This self-assessment report is part of the LGA EFLG Peer Challenge process. If it was not completed, then we would not be able to take part in the process. It has also provided the ability to self-identify areas of improvement.

Other options considered

7. The only alternative option would be to not complete the self-assessment and not take part in the Peer Challenge. This would have not been in line with a decision taken by Executive in May 2023 and would mean we may have to pay for a Peer Challenge in the future.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

8. This will contribute to our understanding of how the council is performing around the Council priority of A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset.

Financial and Risk Implications

9. Equality Framework for Local Government – Peer costs will be covered by the Local Government Association; internal room cost will be covered internally. Any additional costs or external room requirements will be covered by the corporate equality budget.

Any additional financial implications identified as an outcome of the Peer Challenge will be articulated in an additional later paper.

10. The risk of reputational damage to the new Council through identification of failings in meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010

Likelihood	3	Impact	4	Risk Score	12
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Legal Implications

12. There should be no legal implications of this decision.

HR Implications

14. There are no HR implications of this decision. However, there may be some outcomes and feedback from the Peer Challenge. This will be considered independently when completed.

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

15. No Equality Impact Assessment is required for this decision as it hopefully improve the outcomes for equality.

Community Safety Implications

16. There are no implications from a community safety perspective.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

19. There are no implications from a climate change and sustainability perspective.

Health and Safety Implications

22. There are no implications from a health and safety perspective.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

24. There are no implications from a Health and Wellbeing perspective.

Social Value

25. There are no implications from a social value perspective.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

26. The proposed decision has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

Background

30. Local Authority work on equality and diversity has not been externally reviewed in the County for over 10 years. This means we are working without the

constructive feedback and challenge of other professionals. We have maintained relationships with our Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise sector (VCSFE) and been open to challenge and feedback from this avenue. Equally we have maintained staff networks that provide us with an understanding of how our staff view us and the work we are doing.

31. The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) has been in place for over 8 years and provides an audit process to establish progress on equality in 4 areas

- understanding and working with your communities
- leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- responsive services and customer care
- diverse and engaged workforce

32. The equality framework is intended to help councils:

- Deliver accessible, inclusive and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from under-represented groups.
- Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving.
- Provide equality of opportunity for all staff.
- Meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and support any aspirations to exceed these.

33. The LGA EFLG Peer Challenge Self-Assessment Report is in draft form. Once finalised through this decision it will be sent to the Councils design team.

Background Papers

31. LGA EFLG Peer Challenge Self-Assessment Report