

Subject:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-29	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	26 th November 2026
Report of:	Head of People and Policy	Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Corporate Services
Key Decision:	☒ Forward Plan ☒	General Exception ☐	Special Urgency ☐
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Members of Cabinet to review and comment on the refreshed Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and action plan 2025-2029, attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Members of Cabinet to endorse the strategy for Council approval.
- 1.3 Members of Cabinet to support the implementation of the strategy through ongoing annual equality reports.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The refreshed strategy outlines the Council's commitment to promoting fairness, tackling inequality, and embedding inclusive practices across all services, employment, and community engagement.
- 2.2 The strategy aligns with current equality legislation, the Valley Plan 2025-2029 and Local Government Association Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
- 2.3 The key updates to the strategy includes:
 - Refreshed strategic objectives and four-year action plan;
 - Clear roles and responsibilities across the organisation;
 - Adoption of the socio-economic duty set out in Section 1 Equality Action 2010.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and fostering inclusion across all areas of work, in both employment practices and service delivery
- 3.2 The strategy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 supporting inclusive service delivery, community engagement and employment practices.

The Council has specific duties under the Public Sector Duty (PSD), which requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between people from different backgrounds.

Public Sector Equality Duty also requires the Council is to publish equality information annually

- 3.3 The refreshed strategy builds on the Equality Policy 2021 (Appendix 2), now renamed as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, with an accompanying four-year action plan.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Equality Policy 2021 has been last reviewed as part of the policy review cycle and renamed to reflect a broader inclusive scope.

- 4.2 The strategy and action plan has been refreshed to align with the EFLG and incorporate self - assessment findings which currently place the Council at the 'Developing' level. self-assessment. The framework will be used to monitor and drive improvement.

- 4.3 The strategy sets out the Council's new proposed equality objectives:

- **Inclusive Community Engagement** – strengthen involvement of diverse communities using 'lived' experience to shape services.
- **Leadership and Organisational Commitment** – ensure members and managers are accountable, supported by Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)
- **Accessible and Responsive Services** – remove barriers to access, provide inclusive design and monitor access.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Workforce** - build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, promote fair recruitment and support wellbeing.

- 4.4 The strategy proposes to adopt the principle of the Socio-Economic Duty set out in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 as part of our commitment to reducing inequality. This means that when making strategic decisions, the Council will actively consider how its policies and practices can help support the reduction of inequalities outcomes which result from socio-economic disadvantages.

- 4.5 To ensure this duty is embedded in decision-making, the Council will explicitly include socio-economic disadvantage within its impact assessment framework and will add to the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

- 4.6 It is proposed the Council will adopt an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) framework to ensure inclusive evidence-based decisions to reduce inequalities linked to protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantages.

- 4.7 Mandatory equality training will be provided to all staff and members at induction, with refresher training at appropriate intervals. Specific training on Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs), unconscious bias inclusive leadership and other relevant training will be completed to staff and members as required.

5. RISK

- 5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

Failure to implement the strategy effectively may result in:

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- Non-compliance with statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- Reputational damage and loss of public trust;
- Missed opportunities to improve service delivery and workforce diversity;
- Increased risk of discrimination claims or complaints.

Mitigation includes robust governance, mandatory training, and regular performance monitoring

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the strategy. Implementation will be supported through existing service budgets and resources. Any additional costs related to training or data systems will be considered through standard budget planning processes

7. LEGAL

- 7.1 No additional comments to be made in relation to this report.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The strategy underpins all Council policies and decision-making processes. It ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across:

- Service planning and delivery;
- Workforce practices;
- Community engagement;
- Procurement and partnership working.

- 8.2 The strategy strengthens the Council's commitment to inclusive governance and continuous improvement.

- 8.3 Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Corporate Management Team, Portfolio Holder and Lead Member Equalities Champion.

- 8.4 While no direct impact is identified at this strategic level, the strategy is designed to positively influence outcomes for all protected characteristics. Specific impacts will be assessed through Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) as part of implementation.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 The refreshed strategy provides a clear and accountable framework for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across Rossendale. It reflects best practice, legal compliance, and the Council's ambition to be a fair and inclusive organisation. Endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will support its successful implementation and ensure ongoing scrutiny of progress.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025 and action plan	Attached as Appendix 1
Equality Policy 2021	Attached as Appendix 2



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2025

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1. Introduction

Rossendale Borough Council (the Council) is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity, and fostering inclusion across all areas of our work.

The strategy sets out our approach to embedding equality in service delivery, community engagement, and employment practices to support the Council's commitment to build a fair and inclusive borough to identify and address inequality and bias.

The strategy aligns with the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and underpins our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The strategy aligns with the Council's Code of Conduct for staff and members, which sets expectations around respect, fairness, and integrity. All staff and members have a shared responsibility to champion equality, challenge discrimination, and model inclusive behaviors in line with the Equality Act.

2. Scope

The strategy applies to:

- All council services, strategies, decisions and functions, including planning, commissioning, procurement, consultation, and service delivery;
- All council staff, members, agency workers, contractors, and volunteers;
- External partners and organisations working with or on behalf of the Council;
- All interactions with residents, service users and communities.

Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion principles are embedded across all our work and relationships.

3. Our Vision for Equality

The Council want Rossendale to be a borough where:

- Everyone has equal access to opportunities and services;
- Diversity is recognised, valued, and respected;
- Inequalities are challenged and addressed;
- Council services and employment practices are inclusive, equitable and accessible to all.

4. Legal and Policy Context

The Council is committed to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people from different backgrounds.

Under the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics include:

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

The strategy supports our responsibility under the **Human Rights Act 1998** ensuring that we act in ways that respect and uphold people's rights in everything we do.

The Council recognises that fairness does not always mean treating everyone the same and embrace the principle of equality, providing tailored support to meet individual needs.

The Council adopts the principle of the Socio-Economic Duty (Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010) as part of its commitment to reducing inequality and addressing disadvantage.

To ensure inclusive and evidence-based decision-making, the Council uses an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) framework. This helps us understand how our policies and decisions affect different groups, particularly those with protected characteristics and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The Council's approach to Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs):

- Conduct IIAs for all new or significantly revised policies, strategies, procedures, functions, and decisions.
- Identify potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Ensure IIAs are proportionate, transparent, and embedded early in the decision-making process.
- Publish completed IIAs alongside key decisions to promote accountability.
- Factor the needs of disadvantaged and protected groups into strategic planning and resource allocation.

- Identify and mitigate any disproportionate negative impacts on vulnerable or low-income groups.
 - Strengthen our evidence base to tackle inequality and improve transparency.
 - Demonstrate leadership by going beyond minimum legal standards to promote inclusion.
-

5. Our Equality Objectives (2025–2029)

Our Equality Objectives bring together our ambitions and commitments across services, leadership, workforce, and community engagement. These objectives support the Council's Valley Plan:

- **Inclusive Community Engagement** – strengthen involvement of diverse communities using 'lived' experience to shape services.
 - **Leadership and Organisational Commitment** – ensure members and managers are accountable, supported by Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)
 - **Accessible and Responsive Services** – remove barriers to access, provide inclusive design and monitor access.
 - **Diverse and Inclusive Workforce** - build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, promote fair recruitment and support wellbeing.
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6. Roles and Responsibilities

Members

- Ensure equality through decision-making and promote equality through community leadership;
- Scrutinise progress on equality objectives;
- The Leader of the Council holds Cabinet-level responsibility for equality and will nominate a Member Equality Champion.

Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team

- Provide strategic leadership on equality and inclusion;
- Ensure equality is integrated into service planning and policy development;
- Oversee completion and use of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs).

Heads of Service and Managers

- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion within their teams and service areas;
- Ensure all staff are trained and supported on equality matters;
- Lead on the completion of IIAs for relevant projects and decisions.

Staff

- Treat colleagues and customers with fairness, dignity and respect;

- Participate in equality training and apply learning in their roles;
- Contribute to an inclusive workplace and challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Human Resources

- Ensure fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment and employment practices;
- Monitor and report workforce equality data;
- Support initiatives to improve workforce diversity and inclusion.

Partners, Contractors, and Suppliers

- Demonstrate compliance with equality legislation and Council expectations;
- Deliver inclusive services and employment practices when working with or on behalf of the Council.

7. Tackling Hate Crime and Promoting Respect

The Council takes a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime and all forms of discrimination. Everyone in our borough should feel safe, respected, and free from prejudice.

The Council adopts a victim-centred definition of hate crime, where the perception of the victim or any other person is central. All reports are taken seriously, and support is offered to those affected.

To reinforce this commitment, the Council has formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, supporting efforts to identify and address antisemitic behaviour and better protect Jewish residents and communities.

8. Governance, Monitoring and Accountability

The Council is committed to robust governance and transparent monitoring of its equality commitments.

- The Corporate Management Team will oversee the implementation of this strategy and monitor progress against equality objectives through annual performance reporting.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review and challenge annual equality reports to support continuous improvement.
- Any failure to follow this strategy will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action in line with Council procedures.
- All equality-related data will be collected, stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

9. Training and Development

The Council is committed to ensuring all staff and members have the knowledge and skills to promote equality, challenge discrimination, and support inclusive practice, this will be achieved by.

- Delivering mandatory equality training to all new employees as part of the corporate induction process, with refresher training at appropriate intervals;
 - Including mandatory equality and inclusion training as part of the councillor induction and ongoing development programme;
 - Providing specific training on Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs), unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and other relevant topics to staff and members as required.
-

10. Addressing Breaches of the Strategy

- Any concerns about potential breaches of the strategy should be raised with your line manager in the first instance, or through the Council's Whistleblowing Policy if appropriate.
 - Breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, Formal Complaints Process or Standards Complaints Process, depending on the nature of the incident.
 - In serious cases, the Council may consider legal or contractual action where breaches involve suppliers, partners or external providers.
-

11. Equality Monitoring

Monitoring is key to identifying inequality, informing service improvement, and ensuring that we are meeting the needs of the Council's workforce and community, this will be achieved by:

- Use monitoring data to assess whether our policies, services, and employment practices are effective and inclusive;
- Incorporate equality analysis into performance reviews and service planning;
- Monitor the workforce by protected characteristic in relation to:
 - Recruitment and retention;
 - Training and development;
 - Disciplinary and grievance procedures;
 - Pay and progression;
 - Staff turnover and leavers.

All equality monitoring information will be handled in line with data protection law, and anonymised where required.

12. Implementation and Review

- The strategy will be delivered through the Council's Equality Strategy and Action Plan;
 - An Annual Equality Report will track and share progress;
 - The strategy will be formally reviewed every four years, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation, local context, or organisational priorities
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13. Contact and Accessibility

To request this policy in an alternative format or language, or to raise a concern, please contact:

Policy and Performance Team

Email: peopleandpolicy@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01706 252499

Website: [Rossendale Borough Council Main Homepage – Rossendale Borough Council](#)



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Rossendale Borough Council (the Council) is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity, and fostering inclusion across all areas of our work.

The policy compliments the Council's **Code of Conduct** for staff and members, and aligns with the **Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)** and underpins our responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010**, including the **Public Sector Duty**.

Our Vision

We want Rossendale to be a Borough where:

- Everyone has equal access to opportunities and services;
- Diversity is recognised, valued, and respected;
- Inequalities are challenged and addressed;
- Council services and employment practices are fair, inclusive, and responsive to need.



Our Role

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion applies to all council employees, members, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, and external partners.

Everyone should:

- Treat others with fairness, dignity and respect;
- Help create an inclusive workplace and challenge inappropriate behaviours;
- And deliver inclusive services for all our customers.

Protected Characteristics

 Age	 Disability	 Gender Reassignment
 Marriage/Civil Partnership	 Pregnancy/Maternity	 Race
 Religion/Belief	 Sex	 Sexual Orientation

Our Equality Objectives

Our Equality Objectives bring together our ambitions and commitments across services, leadership, workforce, and community engagement. These objectives support the Council's Valley Plan and reflect the values set in our Equality Policy.



Inclusive Community Engagement

Strengthen involvement of diverse communities using 'lived' experience to shape services.



Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Ensure members and managers are accountable supported by Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs).



Accessible and Responsive Services

Remove barriers to access, provide inclusive design and monitor access.



Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Build a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, promote fair recruitment and support wellbeing.

Promoting Respect

We take a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime and all forms of discrimination. Everyone in our Borough should feel safe, respected, and free from prejudice. We adopt a victim-centred definition of hate crime, and have formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

Integrated Impact Assessments are a vital tool for understanding how our decisions affect different people and groups with protected characteristics and those facing socio-economic disadvantage. They help us make inclusive, evidence-based choices and avoid unintended discrimination.

Breaches of this policy can be raised via the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – Action Plan 2025-2029

Objective 1 – Inclusive community engagement			
Action	Responsible Officer	Actions/Outcomes	Completion
Develop a Community Engagement Framework, including a Statement of Community Involvement	Communities and Partnership Manager	Draft framework, consult stakeholders, publish statement	TBC
Make digital communications content, particularly social media more accessible, including the use of alternative text on images and captions for video	Web champions/ Policy and Performance Officer	Audit current content, train staff, implement accessibility tools	TBC
Make non digital communications more accessible	Policy and Performance Officer	Audit current tools, develop and implement plan and tool kit	TBC
Develop the Council’s approach to consultation, promoting engagement from all sectors of the community	Policy and Performance Officer	Develop inclusive consultation toolkit promote via community networks	TBC
Ensure the Council’s website remains accessible in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (websites and Mobile Applications and Accessibility Regulations 2018)	Head of ICT and Customer Services/web champions	Conduct accessibility audit, implement WCAG 2.1 standards	Ongoing
Develop a Digital Inclusion Framework, including establishing a network of partner organisations who support digitally excluded residents, webpages detailing support available.	Communities and Partnership Manager	Partner network, support webpages, staff/member survey	TBC
Celebrate cultural diversity and heritage in partnership with community groups	Communities and Partnership Manager/Officers	Partner with groups, host events, promote via social media	Ongoing

Objective 2 – Leadership and organisational commitment			
Action	Responsible Officer	Actions/ Outcomes	Completion
Introduce an annual Equality and Inclusion Leadership Statement from the Leader and Chief Executive	Chief Executive/ Leader	Draft and publish statement annually	Annually
Strengthen scrutiny role by adding EDI performance review to O&S work programme – Annual Equality Report	Director of Economic Development	Add EDI review to O&S terms of reference, train members	TBC
Delivery mandatory EDI training to all staff and members to feel confident to support the needs of customers (including Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)inclusive leadership, unconscious bias),	HR Manager/Member Services Manager	Induction training, refresher training, legislation updates	Ongoing
Embed Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in all relevant Cabinet and committee reports	All officers/Member Services Manager/ HR Manager	Update report templates, train report authors	Ongoing
Nominate a Lead Officer Equalities Champion	Leader	Appoint champion	Annually
Monitor compliments, complaints, service requests and enquiries to support organisational development and customer service delivery.	Corporate Support Manager	Monitor data, develop and implement improvement	TBC
Develop an Equality Working Group to act as a critical friend to services in developing and reviewing Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA)	Head of People and Policy	Form group, schedule quarterly meetings	TBC
Review the Council’s Modern Slavery Statement to meet legislative requirements	Head of Legal Services	Update statement and policy, publish on Council website	TBC
Achieve LGA equality status	Head of People and Policy	Apply assessment criteria to current working practices, amend EDI strategy action plan accordingly	Annually
Review Complaints Policy and Procedure	Corporate Support Manager	Consult stakeholders and refresh the Policy and Procedures	TBC

Objective 3 – Design and deliver services that meet the needs of all residents and address barriers to access			
Action	Responsible Officer	Actions/ Outcomes	Completed
Complete annual Residents Survey with equality monitoring	Policy and Performance Officer	Design survey, analyse data, publish findings	Annually
Complete accessibility audits for all frontline services, buildings, open spaces including digital platforms	Head of Environmental Services/Head of ICT and Customer Services/ Facilities and Safety Manager	Conduct audits, implement improvements	TBC
Implement Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) into service delivery models, regularly reviewing and adapting the assessment based on community and service users feedback and assessment findings	Service Managers	Train officers, Equality Working Group to review and support officers	Ongoing
Expand translation, interpretation and alternative format provision, ensure access and fair service for those with communication barriers	Head of People and Policy/ Head of ICT and Customer Services	Conduct audits, implement improvements	TBC
Improve the Council's data collection to help understand barriers to accessing our services	Service Managers	Review forms and add demographic fields, and other non-written methods eg focus groups to improve accessibility	TBC
Include social value clauses in all contracts, with focus on equality outcomes.	Procurement Officer	Update procurement templates, train officers, monitor outcomes	TBC

Objective 4 – Build a workforce that reflects the community, with fair recruitment and a culture of inclusion			
Action	Responsible Officer	Actions/Outcomes	Completed
Develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy promoting support for good health and wellbeing to our staff	HR Manager/ Facilities and Safety Manager	Draft Strategy and annual wellbeing activity plan	Qu 4 2026
Undertake gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting and develop an action plan to close any gaps	HR Manager	Analyse data, develop improvement plan and publish Annual Equality Report	Annually
Maintain Disability Confident accreditation	HR Manager	Submit renewal, promote inclusive practices	Ongoing
Promote targeted recruitment outreach	HR Manager	Working with schools, DWP, Rossendale Works, Community groups	Ongoing
Monitor Application Tracking System (ATS), evaluate efficiency and anonymous application process	HR Manager	Review process and implement improvements, embed equalities in interviews	Qu 4 2026
Promote self-declaration of protected characteristics amongst staff	HR Manager	Staff campaign, promoting staff reassurance in confidentiality	Annually
Publish an Annual Equality Report	Head of People and Policy	Include in O&S programme and forward plan	Annually
Develop a communications plan to celebrate EDI activities, religious festivals, awareness days, celebrations, personal stories etc.	Policy and Performance Officer	Calendar of events, stories and awareness days	Qu 4 2026

Equality Policy 2021

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Responsible Service	People and Policy	Version/Status	Final
Responsible Author	Head of People and Policy	Date Agreed/ Agreed At	SOD: 07/09/2021 Cabinet: 04/07/2021
Date last Amended	01/07/2021	Due for Review	September 2024

Equality Policy

1. Aim and Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 This Policy is a statement of how Rossendale Borough Council intends to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and to tackle discrimination and harassment regarding our employees, residents and service users in all operations of the organisation and the services it provides.
- 1.2 The Council recognises its statutory equality duties under legislation in terms of employment and service provision and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.
- 1.3 The Council aims to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment for reasons relating to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sex Orientation.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees, councillors or other person under the Council's control in connection with any council related activity.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chief Executive with the Directors are responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of this Policy and for ensuring that service planning and performance management systems incorporate the specific equality objectives in terms of employment and service provision.
- 3.2 The Leader of Council has Cabinet responsibility for equality and there is a dedicated Member Equality Champion. Each year, the Leader of the Council will identify which Portfolio Holder has responsibility for equality.
- 3.3 All councillors have responsibility to ensure that the principles of this Policy support the Council's decision making process.
- 3.4 All employees have responsibility to assist the Council to meet its commitment to promote equality, inclusion and diversity within their duties as a council officer.
- 3.5 The Council will work with our stakeholders, contractors and partners, to ensure their policies reflect the equality objectives set out in this Policy.

4. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 4.1 **The Equality Act 2010**

The [Equality Act 2010](#) states that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. The Act has two main purposes, to harmonise discrimination law and strengthen the law to support the progress of equality.

4.2 Public Sector Equality Duty

The general and specific duties placed on public bodies are set out in the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

4.3 The general duty sets out three main aims. As a public body, the council must have due regard to the need to:

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

4.4 The specific duties are:

- To publish equality information (relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty) at least annually.
- To publish at least one quality objective, we think we should achieve in order to meet the general duty. This must be done at least every four years and be specific and measurable.

4.5 Compliance with the equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others in order to take into account of their differing needs.

4.6 Equality Impact Assessments

Although Equality Impact Assessments are not a legal requirement: the council has embedded an Equality Impact Assessment process to assess the impact of our policies, practices and decision making on equality. Using good equality information and analysis can help identify practical steps to mitigate or eliminate any negative impacts or discrimination, within the Council's policy development and decision making processes. Equality Impact Assessment template (Appendix 3).

4.7 The council will also give due regard to the impact of our policies and decisions on:

- People with caring responsibilities – caring responsibilities are where an adult or child relies upon you for care and attention, and that you assist with their daily routine.
- Human rights –to protecting and preserving the rights and freedoms that belongs to all individuals regardless of their nationality and citizenship. This includes protection against domestic violence and violence against women.

4.8 In addition to accepting a victim-centred definition of hate crime, the council commits to the adoption of the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism](#)

together with its contemporary examples under the Public Sector Duty as part of our ongoing work to promote equality and diversity and combat discrimination and hate crime.

- 4.9 All types of harassment, victimisation and bullying in the workplace and community are unacceptable.

5. Our Equality Objectives

- 5.1 The Council's equality objectives are:

- To enhance understanding of and promote equality and diversity at all levels within the Council.
- To have a diverse workforce that aims to be representative of the borough and to ensure that all staff are treated fairly.
- To assess, consult and evaluate the equality impact of our policies and decisions and to change where reasonably possible what we do to mitigate or eliminate any inequality.
- To ensure that our staff and councillors engage and communicate with members of the community in an accessible and inclusive way.
- To continue working with our partners, where appropriate, to reduce inequality in all of our communities.

6. Our Commitment to Equality

6.1 Employment practices

The Council considers equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of employment, from advertising vacancies, recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training and personal development to reasons for terminating employment.

- 6.2 We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring the Council's commitment to promote equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in all Council policies and practices.
- Committing to the government [Disability Confident employer scheme](#) to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.
- Ensuring that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver our services.
- Ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time or employed on a temporary basis.
- Making reasonable adjustment to working arrangements where they cause a disadvantage to an employee due to a protected characteristic.
- Ensuring that we give equal consideration to people's needs and development opportunities throughout their employment.
- Ensuring any protected characteristic is not used as a criterion for redundancy.
- Challenging and taking appropriate action of any discriminatory behaviour of employees

and offering support and advice to affected employees.

6.3 **Access to services**

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and aims to create the best possible quality of life for people who live or work in Rossendale.

6.4 We will achieve this by:

- Seeking to better engage with people with in the planning and delivery of services.
- Considering reasonable adjustments to support the delivery of assessable services to all users.
- Providing clear information about our services and where necessary, in a variety of formats.
- Ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective.
- Assessing the impact of and monitoring our major projects to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made.

6.5 **Working with partners**

The Council's Procurement Strategy commits us to making sure that contractors, suppliers and funded service providers promote equality and diversity.

6.6 We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that contractors, suppliers and partners have an Equality Policy in place to support the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Challenging and taking appropriate action of any discriminatory behaviour of our contractors, suppliers and partners.

6.7 **Working with our communities**

We need to understand the views of our residents, customers and communities to ensure that the services we design and deliver are appropriate and meet the needs of all.

6.8 We will achieve this by:

- Engaging and consulting with our partners, customers, residents and communities regularly.
- Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments to ensure we take into consideration any discriminatory decision making which may have on our communities.

7. **Training**

7.1 The council will ensure that employees and councillors have awareness and appropriate equality training. The Council will achieve this by:

- Providing mandatory equality training for all employees as part of the induction programme and regular refresher training.
- Providing mandatory equality training as part of its councillor induction and development programme.

8. Breaches of this Policy

- 8.1 Any concerns regarding breaches to this policy should initially be raised with your line manager or the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 8.2 Breaches of this Policy will be handled through the Council's Disciplinary Procedure or Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy depending on the nature of breach. Legal action may be taken where appropriate.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

- 9.1 Monitoring is an essential part of tackling inequality and discrimination and will help us check whether our policies, services and organisational culture are meeting the needs of our employees and community.
- 9.2 The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the Policy through the Council's performance management reporting process. Any data collected will be analysed and used within the Council for setting targets, reviewing our service delivery, developing services and assisting with making changes.
- 9.3 The Council will monitor its workforce profile on the basis of the protected characteristics in the following areas:
- Training and development.
 - Disciplinary procedures and grievances.
 - Those leaving the council's employment.
 - Workforce and job applicant profiles.
 - Employee pay profiles.
- 9.4 Equality monitoring data is subject to the [Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\) 2018](#) which came into force on 25th May 2018.

10. Policy Review

- 10.1 This Policy will be subject to review every three years or following significant changes to equality legislation, local circumstances or national equality policy to ensure that it is current and compliant.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is about ensuring that all people are treated with fairness and respect, recognising the needs of individuals and that some people may need to be treated differently to give them the same opportunities

Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense and understanding how these differences can be developed for the good of the individual and society as a whole.

Inclusion is about an individual's experience within the workplace and in wider society and, the extent to which they feel valued and included. Successful and lasting inclusion involves a shared vision, values and a sense of belonging for all customers

Protected Characteristics

The duties and the act seek to outlaw discrimination against a person or group of people because of their:

Age – Relates to a person belonging to a particular age group (e.g. 32-year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 65-75-year olds).

Disability – Relates to a person who has either a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender Reassignment – When a person is transitioning or they intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their gender.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – Marriage can either be between a man or a woman, or between partners of the same sex. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex.

Pregnancy and Maternity – Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expect a baby. Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this included not treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race – Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief – Religion refers to any religion or reference to religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes any religious or philosophical belief or reference to belief, including a reference to a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex – Refers to an individual being male or female.

Sexual Orientation – A person's sexual attraction towards people of the gender they are attracted to (i.e. towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or to both sexes).

Appendix 2 – About the People of Rossendale

Rossendale is an authority within East Lancashire that covers 138 kilometres and has 14 wards. This is approximately 4.8% of Lancashire.

The overall population has seen some growth since 2001, but has not kept pace with increases at the national level. The ethnic mix (2011 census) is less diverse than other authorities within East Lancashire. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani, with the population predominantly white. The 2020 mid-year population estimate total for the authority was 71,432, a mere 50 lower than 2019.

The population can be broken down by equality to provide us with a better understanding of the within our communities.

Age - the age of our population is important when planning services so we can meet the needs of our community. According to the 2020 Office for National Statistics, there is an estimate of 43,900 residents aged 16-64. The average age in Rossendale is 39.6 years which is compared to 40.5 years in Lancashire (2011 census). The Rossendale age group breakdown is similar to all comparator areas. But Rossendale appears to be witnessing a larger shift in its age group with a relatively larger decrease in those ages 0-15 and 25-44. There is also a relatively larger increase in those aged 45+, hence an ageing population.

Disability - In Rossendale, it is estimated that 1 in 5 people have a limiting long-term illness or disability. 6,818 (2011 census) are very limited with the tasks they can carry out day-to-day. With the increase in life expectancy within the Borough there is no guarantee that the extra year's life is a healthy life expectancy, with an increase in ill health and disability.

Gender Reassignment – there are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of those who identify as trans or transgender within Rossendale or the UK as a whole. Gender identity is not incorporated into the census or other official statistics.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – within Rossendale approximately 54,811, 46.7672%, people are either married or are in a registered civil partnership. Only 0.2025% are registered as a civil partnership. These statistics are detailed in the 2011 census.

Race – there is a total of 63,778 residents within the Rossendale Borough that identify themselves as 'White', 94%. This compares to 92% in Lancashire and 85% nationally (2011 census). There are a total of 602 people, 0.8855%, who identify as Mixed/Multi Ethnic group. 3396 residents, 4.9954% as Asian/Asian British and 123 people, 0.181% who identify as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. Finally, 83 residents. 0.1221% identify as another Ethnic Group. Rossendale has an almost identical record with Lancashire when looking at the change over time of ethnic groups, but the scale of ethnic change in Rossendale is less than both the North West and nationally. 97% of those ages 16+ in Rossendale speak English as their first language, this compares to 95% in Lancashire and 91% nationally.

Religion and Belief – all details providing religion and beliefs have been collated from the 2011 census. Within Rossendale there are a number of religions and beliefs followed by local people. These include Christian (63.828%), Buddhist (0.2398%), Hindu (0.1412%), Jewish (0.0986%), Muslim (3.8437%), Sikh (0.0132%), Other (0.3398%), No Religion (25.1464%) and Religion not stated (6.3487%).

Sex – there is almost an equal gender split within the Rossendale Borough with 33,367 males and 34,615 females.

Sexual Orientation – there are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of the lesbian, gay and bisexual, etc. (LBGTQ+) population within Rossendale or the UK as a whole. Sexual orientation is not incorporated into the census or other official statistics.

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

The council carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to analyse the effects of our decisions, policies or practices.

Throughout this document, policy refers to any policy, strategy, project, procedure, function, decision or delivery or service.

The EIA should be undertaken/started at the beginning of the policy development process before any decisions are made.

Policies are developed and reviewed using a consultative approach involving relevant internal and external stakeholders. Officers must consider what action needs to be taken to help overcome or minimise any disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic will experience in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Name of policy:	
Lead officer name	
Job title	
Service area	
Telephone contact	
Email contact	
Date Assessment commenced	
Date assessment completed	

The main aims/objectives of this policy are:

Indicate the status of the policy or decision

New/proposed ☐ Modified/adapted ☐ Existing ☐

Indicate protected characteristics have been assessed

Age

☐

Disability

☐

Gender reassignment

☐

Religion/belief

☐

Sexual orientation

☐

Sex

☐

Pregnancy/maternity

☐

Race

☐

Marriage or civil partnership

☐

1. State any positive or negative impact on the protected characteristic(s) (added additional rows if needed)

Protected characteristic	Positive/Negative	How does it impact?

2. Explain and give examples of any evidence/data used (add additional rows if needed)

Evidence	How does this have an impact on the protected characteristic?

3. Outcome of EIA

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take?	Please indicate
Outcome 1- The EIA has not identified any potential for negative impact on the protected characteristics. Progress to EIA approval – section 5	☐
Outcome 2- The EIA has identified a possibility for negative impact on the protected characteristics. An EIA Action Plan must be completed to mitigate the negative impact – section 4 before approval section 5	☐

4. EIA action plan

Based on the above impact assessment, findings/evidence and outcomes identified, please complete the Action Plan below. The action plan should address:

- Any gaps in findings/evidence research including any consultation or engagement regarding the policy and its actual/potential impacts
- How you will address any gaps
- What practical changes/action that will help reduce any negative impacts identified
- What practical changes/action that will help enhance any positive contributions to equality

Negative impact identified	Action required	Lead officer	To be completed

Monitoring and reviewing the effect of the policy

Please state how you will monitor the impact and effect of this policy

5. EIA approval (to be completed by the relevant Head of Service/Director)

• Outcome of EIA agreed/approved by Management Team: (date)

• Published on council website: (date)

Signed: (Head of Service/Director) (date)

Appendix 4 – Action Plan 2021/22

Action		Completion Date	Success Measure	Lead Officer
To enhance understanding of and promote equality and diversity at all levels within the Council.				
1	To develop e-learning equality training course for all staff	Quarter 3	All new starters and staff complete training as per the Policy	HR Manager
2	Develop e-learning equality training course for all Councillors	Annually	All Councillors complete the training	Member Services Manager
3	Develop regular internal communications to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.	Ongoing	Minimum 2 articles per quarter	VivaPR
4	Report annually on Workforce Profile	Quarter 2	Equalities championed at CMT and Cabinet	Head of People and Policy
To have a diverse workforce that aims to be representative of the borough and to ensure that all staff are treated fairly.				
1	Create a culture where more staff feel confident to self-declare a disability	Annually	% increase of number of self-declaration forms returned	Payroll Manager
2	Increase number of staff aged 18-24 entering the workforce through a structured apprenticeship scheme or trainees	Quarter 4	Increase number of staff aged 18-24 years	HR Manager
3	Develop and implement an action plan to encourage BAME applicants	Quarter 4	Improve the % representation of BAME employees	HR Manager
4	Renew Disability Confident accreditation	Quarter 2	Accreditation renewed	HR Manager
To assess, consult and evaluate the equality impact of our policies and decisions and to change where reasonably possible what we do to mitigate or eliminate any inequality.				
1	Review the Council's Equality Impact Assessment guidance	Quarter 3	Improved equality data to support decision making process	Head of People and Policy
2	Provide Equality Impact Assessment Training for staff and Councillors	Quarter 3	Improved equality data to support decision making process	Head of People and Policy
3	Develop a staff group to act as a critical friend to review Equality Impact Assessments	Quarter 3	Minimum 2 per quarter	Head of People and Policy

4	Develop and maintain an Equality Impact Assessment completion record	Quarter 3	Published on the Council website	Corporate Officer
To ensure that our staff and Councillors engage and communicate with members of the community in an accessible and inclusive way.				
1	Monitor Council website is up to date with Council service information and accessible to service users	Ongoing	Feedback acted upon	Corporate Officer
2	Monitor the equality impact of moving to more digital services, and remove or mitigate barriers or potential adverse impact	Ongoing	Adjustments made	Managers/ICT
3	Develop the Council's approach to consultation and engagement to increased representation of all sections of the community	Ongoing	Increase representation of all sections of the community in engagement and consultation	Communities Team/ Councillors
To continue working with our partners, where appropriate, to reduce inequality in all of our communities.				
1	Review Procurement Strategy to include procurement equality requirements and raise awareness with contract managers	Ongoing	Contract monitoring indicates that commissioned service providers are compliant with equalities requirements.	Monitoring Officer
2	Support Prevent group to highlight concerns or risks in our communities related to radicalisation	Ongoing	Reduction in Prevent cases	Communities