

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY 2025 TO 2028

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the adoption of Pendle Borough Councils' Equality Policy 2025-2028.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Equality Policy 2025-2028 be approved
- (2) That the implementation of the policy's objectives is supported through relevant service planning and partnership working.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- (2) To promote fairness, remove barriers to opportunity, and foster inclusive, connected communities.

BACKGROUND

1. Pendle Borough Council remains committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of its work. The Equality Policy 2025–2028 sets out the Council's vision and approach to ensuring equitable access to services, opportunities, and participation for all residents and partners.
2. The Policy supports our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It outlines how the Council will eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

3. The Policy also supports the Council's ongoing efforts to promote equality and inclusion across its services, aligning with wider strategies on community cohesion, engagement, and service transformation.

ISSUE

4. The Equality Policy 2025–2028 defines Pendle's corporate approach to equality and sets key objectives to:

- Ensure Council services are inclusive and accessible.
- Improve the collection and use of equality data.
- Engage communities in a representative and inclusive way.
- Promote equality through partnership and procurement processes.

5. This Policy aligns with the Council Plan priorities long-term and aims to build:

- accessible and inclusive services that meet the needs of all residents.
- strong, safe and inclusive communities by ensuring all voices are heard and represented.
- on reducing health inequalities and improving wellbeing for everyone, regardless of background.

Key features of the Policy include:

- Clarification of legal and regulatory duties.
- Recognition of all protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- An embedded process for Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).
- Defined roles and responsibilities for Members, officers, partners, and contractors.
- A commitment to monitoring and continuous improvement.

6. Key Objectives of the Policy include:

- Accessible Services – We will strive to design and deliver inclusive services that meet the needs of all residents.
- Better Use of Data – where data is available, we will use it to inform policies and decisions.
- Inclusive Engagement – We will continue to strengthen relationships with communities, especially wherever possible identified, underrepresented groups.
- Fair Partnerships – we will work with our external partners and contractors to ensure they reflect our equality commitments.

7. Expected Outcomes will include:

- Improved access to Council services for marginalised or underrepresented groups where possible.
- Stronger trust and greater transparency in decision-making processes over time.
- Increased opportunities for inclusion in community activities and civic participation.

- A positive perception of the Council's commitment to fairness and inclusion in service delivery.

8. Monitoring and Review

Progress against the Policy will be monitored via Equality Impact Assessments and follow up action plans.

The Equality Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier in response to changes in legislation, organisational structure, or community needs.

CONCLUSION

9. The Equality Policy 2025–2028 provides a clear and practical framework to embed equality into all Council functions. It promotes inclusivity, supports fair service delivery, and demonstrates leadership in building a more connected and cohesive Pendle.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The Policy provides a framework to guide the Council's approach to equality and outlines expectations across all service areas.

Financial: None arising from the report

Legal: Supports compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Risk Management: None arising from the report.

Health and Safety: None arising directly, but improved inclusion practices may reduce health inequalities.

Sustainability: None arising from the report

Community Safety: Promoting equality can help reduce tensions and foster better relations across diverse communities.

Equality and Diversity: This report underpins the Council's ongoing commitment to fairness, inclusion and equality.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:
Equality and Diversity Policy 2025-2028

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None