

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	7 April 2026
Subject:	Single Equality Scheme
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Matt Fletcher, Cabinet Member for People Development.
Responsible Officer:	Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance and Waste
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Single Equality Scheme 2026 Appendix 2: Equality Action Plan Report 2025/26

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To provide Members with an update on action taken to help meet the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act (2010).

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That Cabinet approve the Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objectives for 2026/27 as recommended by the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Equality Act (2010) replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with the aim of simplifying the law and removing inconsistencies. The Act places a requirement on public bodies to demonstrate compliance with each part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).**

- 1.2 Under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities have a duty to have ‘due regard’ to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.3 Underpinning the General Duties are Specific Duties which require public authorities to:
- Publish information that demonstrates how the authority is meeting the General Duty (updating this at least annually).
 - Publish one or more specific and measurable objectives to achieve the General Duty (updating these at least every four years).
 - Publish the information and objectives in an accessible way, so that the public can see for themselves how the authority is performing.
- 1.4 ‘Information’ includes that relating to the protected characteristics of employees and other people affected by policies and practices:
- Workforce profiles (this can include data about recruitment, training, promotion, flexible working, maternity returners, grievance/issues, dismissal, leavers, service, pay, satisfaction, Members). Only applies where the organisation has more than 150 employees.
 - Service user/community profiles (this can include information about outcomes such as health, safety and wellbeing, achievement such as skills and education, access to services, satisfaction, complaints, feedback, demographics).
- 1.5 Case law has clarified that considerations of equality should not only be placed at the centre of policy development but that bodies subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty must apply this duty to the carrying out of any functions of a public body not just statutory functions.
- 1.6 Local authorities also have specific duties under the Act to publish Equality Information annually and ‘Equality Objectives’ at least every four years. All such information is either included in this report or signposted to. The Council’s [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpages](#) also promote this information. The [Equality Impact Assessments](#) webpage lists all the Equality Impact Assessments the Council has completed (since September 2023) that are in the public domain.
- 1.7 The Council wants to understand the needs and views of our residents and people working in our district. We have a dedicated [web page](#) to access all our consultations and welcome residents to participate. The public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to respond to consultations via the “[Let’s Talk Mid Devon](#)” portal.

1.8 Whilst the Council aims to provide high-quality services to all who live or work in the district, we recognise people may wish to complain, or pay a compliment to our officers or give us suggestions on how we could improve a service. Full details for providing feedback are available on our [website](#) using a number of different mediums.

1.9 The Single Equality Scheme has been reviewed and updated by officers (Appendix 1). This is a detailed strategy document which sets out the Council's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This document has been revised and updated for 2026/27. The document is structured in four sections:

1. Introduction
2. Equality Profile for Mid Devon
3. Equality Objectives
4. Mid Devon District Council – Working Practices

2.0 Equality Objectives

2.1 From 2024/25, the Council changed its approach to Equality Objectives to make them more specific and measurable whilst retaining the ambitious outcomes we wish to deliver.

2.2 Progress to meet the Equality Objectives in 2025/26 is detailed in the Equality Action Plan Report at Appendix 2.

2.3 The Equality Objectives for the coming year (2026/27) are arranged by six themes, and proposed measurement is provided in parentheses. They have been discussed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group and reviewed by Leadership Team.

2.4 Equality Objectives for 2026/27

1. Meeting the needs of an aging population.

- Implement the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document (narrative update)
- Provide housing adaptations in MDH housing stock (Number per year)
- Provide adaptations for adults in private sector housing through grant awards (Number per year)
- Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through analysis of data gathered via the completed “Getting to Know You” project, supported by the MDH Vulnerability Policy. Explore annual collection of this data (narrative update)

2. Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation.

- Reduce the impact of rural isolation on vulnerable individuals by improving access to services, information, and support through partnership working and flexible service delivery (MDH) (narrative update).

- Implement the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount Policy (household uptake)
 - Use neighbourhood roadshows to engage tenants in communities with lower satisfaction levels, improving access to information, support, and opportunities to raise concerns. (Number of events/ attendees)
- 3. Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families and individuals with complex needs.**
- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
 - Tackling damp and mould in council housing stock (% of homes reporting damp or mould that quarter)
 - Ensure that families and individuals with complex needs are not disadvantaged in accessing housing services by identifying barriers and providing appropriate, tailored support (MDH) (narrative update)
 - Deliver on Serious Violence Duty through the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (narrative update)
 - Provide grants for adaptations for children in the private housing sector (Number of grants approved)
 - Monitor cases dealt with where hoarding, cluttering or cleanliness in the home is an issue (Number of cases)
 - Monitor homeless approaches (Number per year)
 - Number of homeless approaches where support needs have been identified (Number per year)
 - Undertake private rented housing inspections and monitor those that related to damp and mould (Number per year)
- 4. To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community.**
- Include regular articles contained within internal communications (Number of articles in “The Link”)
 - Ensure that our leisure facilities are accessible and affordable for all carers and young carers, providing them with opportunities to enhance their mental and physical wellbeing. Committing to removing barriers to access and actively encouraging their participation and social connections (narrative and number of people taking up the offer)
 - Work collaboratively with partners to support individuals experiencing mental health issues, helping to promote tenancy sustainment, wellbeing, and early intervention (narrative update)
 - As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
 - Host an annual cost of living event supported by external agencies such as CHAT to address financial stress (narrative)
- 5. Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon**
- Monitor and lobby for better digital connectivity (narrative update)

6. Continuous improvement at Mid Devon District Council

- Staff and Councillors undertake training to improve their understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Equality and Diversity course, % completion/ uptake)
- Develop a better understanding of our workforce, and to understand the comparison between our workforce and the Mid Devon residents as a whole (% of workforce with equality monitoring data)

2.5 Progress to meet our Equality Objectives will continue to be monitored by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Group and be reported annually to the Community, People and Equalities PDG.

3.0 Further Updates on Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

3.1 Gender Pay Gap

Information about the Council's Pay Policy and Pay Supplement Policy was presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2026. Within this, the Council reported on the Council's gender pay gap, this is included at Table 1 for ease of reference.

Table 1: Mid Devon District Council gender pay gap, as reported in the Pay Policy 2025.

	Mean Average Hourly Rate	Median Average Hourly Rate
Male	£17.47	£15.82
Female	£16.95	£15.64
HMRC % Gap	2.98%	1.14%

3.2 The mean gender pay gap for the whole economy (according to the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures) is 6.9%; at Mid Devon District Council's mean gender pay gap is 2.98%, therefore, lower than that for the whole economy.

3.4 EDI Group

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group meets four times per year. This Group contains both council officers and Elected Members. It has had a wide-ranging focus over the past 12 months, including:

- Monitoring the Equality Action Plan
- Reviewing of the Single Equality Scheme and the Equality Objectives
- Monitoring complaints where protected characteristics are indicated
- Considering ongoing work from regional equality networks
- Discussions and collaborative working on topical issues

3.5 Menopause Awareness

Continuing with the work undertaken last year, in 2025/26 there have been three related sessions for all staff to attend, two focused on the menopause and the other on menstrual health. In addition, 13 employees came forward to

train as 'Menopause Champions' with training starting on 4 March 2026 and concluding in early May. Following completion, this new support will be promoted to staff.

Financial Implications

The Single Equality Scheme does not have any financial implications itself beyond those identified in individual service's equality impact assessments.

Legal Implications

The Single Equality Scheme contributes to the Council's complying with the Equality Act (2010). Failure to adopt Equality Objectives or to collect relevant data could lead to the Council being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Risk Assessment

Approving the Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objectives helps to ensure the council meets its legal responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act (2010).

Impact on Climate Change

No impacts identified for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's approach to delivering improved equality outcomes for the district. It details an equality profile for the area and outlines specific objectives the council is undertaking.

The adoption and monitoring of Equality Objectives helps to ensure that the needs of all protected groups are taken into account in service delivery. The reframing of these objectives will ensure that progress being achieved by the Council can be more easily measured and demonstrated.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The Equality Objectives contribute to various sections of the Corporate Plan, but in particular help to support the Council achieve its objectives under the Community, People and Equalities theme, helping to ensure that the Council is "Involving and Engaging with our communities, ensuring everyone is treated with equity and respect, and protecting our most vulnerable."

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 10.03.26

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 10.03.26

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 10.03.26

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 04 March 2026

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 04 March 2026

Cabinet member notified: yes

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (No)

Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (No)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Dr Steve Carr

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Background papers: