



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 16 October 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024/25

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide an overview of the obligations regarding publication of equality information and to allow Members to consider the draft 2024/25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the 2024/25 draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement and offer comment on the content.**
- 2. Recommend the Leader of the Council publishes this information at the earliest opportunity.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2. The public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) came into force in 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

1.3. The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations. The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty and to set equality objectives.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

1.4. The requirement to publish equality information must be met at least annually. This helps to ensure the information published is up-to-date and relevant. The benefits of collecting, using and publishing robust equality information include:

- helping to identify equality challenges so these can be addressed

- having relevant data to enable decision-makers to fully understand how their policies and decisions impact on people with different protected characteristics, including outcomes of individuals
- finding ways to mitigate any adverse impact identified
- maximising opportunities for advancing equality and fostering good relations
- enabling the setting of equality objectives based on robust evidence of the key challenges for staff and service users
- having baseline data available for measuring progress in delivering equality objectives, so improving outcomes for individuals with projected characteristics.

1.5. The benefits to employees and services users include:

- greater transparency about the Council's equality performance regarding employment and service delivery
- Helping them to understand the rationale behind difficult decisions being taken by the Council
- Enabling them to hold the Council to account for its performance on equality.

1.6. Equality impact is identified through the production of this document. In producing this document, the Council can identify potential areas of workforce under representation and highlight good practice. The Annual Position Statement aims to improve awareness of equality responsibilities and further embed those responsibilities within the Council's working practices.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. Tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity will help the Council achieve its vision to be a "thriving district in which to live, work and visit". The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-2027) underpins our commitment to equalities and states that equality objectives will be supported by a delivery plan as part of the People Strategy. It is the responsibility of all Officers and Members to implement the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. The aim of these principals is to inform decision-making at every level within the Council, reflecting an ongoing commitment to eliminating discrimination, the advancing equality of opportunity for all, and fostering good relations between different communities.
- 2.2. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement will be published for information purposes. It is presented to Committee today in draft form to allow Members to comment on the content.

- 2.3. The law does not prescribe a required format for this document. Organisations can present information in any way they choose. They can also determine content beyond that listed above. When the Committee's comments have been heard and considered the document will be put through the design process and published on the Council's website.
- 2.4. The 2024/25 Annual Position Statement includes the Council's current Equality Objectives which cover the period 2024-2027. The document also contains a snapshot of the actions taken against these objectives to provide Members with an overview of achievements.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on public sector organisations when exercising public functions to have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty. These are to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance opportunities for people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't share it
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't share it.
- 3.2. Gov.uk explains that "advancing equality of opportunity means having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their relevant protected characteristics
 - take steps to meet the different needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic
 - encourage participation in public life or any other activity by underrepresented groups
 - take steps to meet the different needs of disabled persons

Considering people's different needs and taking steps to meet those needs can be relevant to avoiding indirect discrimination. There are specific provisions in the act about making reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities".

- 3.3. On the subject of the need to foster good relations, Gov.uk states "fostering good relations means having regard to the need to deal with prejudice and support understanding. For example, some decisions have the power to bring divided groups together and to support their mutual understanding. Other decisions may inadvertently cause people with one protected characteristic to blame people with another for a social problem".
- 3.4. In the interests of clarity, the term "relevant" in the above quotes relates to all of the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

- 3.5. Two further specific duties are placed on public sector organisations, which are to:
- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years
 - Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually.
- 3.6. The publication must include information to show that the Council has properly considered the three aims of the Equality Duty. It must also include information relating to employees who share protected characteristics (for public bodies with 150 or more employees) and information relating to people who are affected by the public body's policies and practices who share protected characteristics, i.e the residents of South Kesteven.
- 3.7. Therefore, the purpose of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement is to share this information and provide an overview of how the Council has complied with the three aims of the Duty during 2024/25.
- 3.8. If the Council does not publish equality information as required by the specific duty regulations, there is a risk of being subjected to legal challenge, as well as potential reputational damage.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The publication of the 2024/25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement is a statutory responsibility therefore, no other options were available for consideration.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To inform Members of action taken to ensure the Council complies with equality law and to reinforce the Council's commitment to the equitability of its services and their delivery.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. Services across the Council were consulted, providing teams with the opportunity to contribute to the content of the document. The purpose of this consultation was to show the collective commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A: Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement for 2024/25.