This report can be made available in alternative formats and languages.

To make a request please telephone 01354- 654321 or e-mail diversity@fenland.gov.uk or info@fenland.gov.uk
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1. Foreword

Welcome to Fenland District Council’s Annual Equality and Diversity report.

Fenland District Council (the Council) recognises the major role that public organisations have to play in advancing equality of opportunity in the United Kingdom. As a large local employer and provider of a wide range of community facing services, the Council is at the heart of improving life opportunities for people who experience disadvantage and discrimination in Fenland.

This report gives a summary of some of the actions we have taken and the progress we have made on improving equality; in the way we serve the people of Fenland promote the diversity of the area and how we act as an employer.

Producing this report has helped the Council identify the key issues affecting its service users and staff. This information will help the Council to inform the development of its services to make them as effective as possible for everyone. The emphasis on carrying out equality analysis for all polices strategies, procedures and functions carried out by the Council means that we understand the impact of the decisions we make on people with different protected characteristics and therefore can plan services more effectively.

By gathering equality data we know that the main issues affecting our communities are cohesion, housing, transport inter-generational population, and access to services. This should be viewed in relationship to the large inward flux of migrant workers, the rural nature of the area where residents live further away from key services than the regional average and this can lead to cases of rural isolation and fear of new emerging communities.

The Council acknowledges that there exists in society individuals and groups who face discrimination (whether intentional or unintentional) based on background and personal circumstances. The unintended consequences of a policy or procedure may have an adverse impact on a particular group. This is particularly important at a time of significant reductions in public sector budgets.

Like all public bodies we have a statutory general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We also have specific legal duties; these include publishing employment information and reporting on how we are integrating equality into our work practices.

The Council is actively working towards fairness for all; that enables everyone to have equal life chances and to work free from discrimination in a society that values the diversity within our district. We seek to create and maintain a district in which each person has an equal entitlement to quality services and employment opportunities irrespective of their race, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status. The Council values the strength that comes with difference, and the positive contribution that diversity brings to the district.

In October 2009, Fenland District Council attained Excellent status on the Customer Service Excellence Framework, and has been reaccredited with this status ever since. This demonstrates our understanding of customer expectations and needs and shows that we are providing excellent customer services to all our community.

The Council’s Business Plan sets out the priorities for the Council and outlines how we will address the challenges ahead. The Business Plan is underpinned by the commitment to develop and support cohesive communities.

This report has been produced to explain how we undertake and integrate this into all our work, both as an employer and service provider.
The Council uses the Customer Service Excellence Framework as the improvement framework against which to measure its performance and development.
2. Background

Fenland District Council (the Council) is committed to delivering excellent services to the district’s diverse range of individuals, groups and communities, whilst continuously improving the way we promote equality and celebrate diversity.

As part of our on-going commitment, we are seeking to collect relevant equality information about our service users and our communities. This information helps us to understand if we are meeting service user needs and how we can improve the services we offer.

We can only provide an effective service to our community if we recognise and understand the diversity that exists within our community, enable our workforce to meet their needs and address any concerns of all our citizens.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discriminatory laws with a single Act. It simplified the law, harmonised all, removed inconsistencies and made it easier for people to understand and comply with legislation. It also strengthened the law in important ways, in order to help tackle discrimination and inequality. (Source: “Equality Act 2010: Specific duties to support the equality duty....” Government Equalities Office)

The specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 require the council, as a Local Authority, to publish information showing compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and to set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

This document publishes information which demonstrates that the council has due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Equality, equity of outcomes and fairness underpin the work, culture and ethos of the Council at all levels. Despite the challenging economic circumstances that we face we have continued to strive to achieve fairness in all of our services and in all our activities.

The Council’s Annual Equality Report is one of the ways in which the Council makes visible the extent to which it is meeting its obligations and responsibilities to recognise diversity and promote greater equality. It tells much of the story of our progress in relation to the key equality objectives that the Council had set for itself, but it still will not be the whole story. Many achievements have been made and progression made on issues that affect the broader well-being of our community and amongst these particularly those who face disadvantage through the promotion of our priorities under the Council’s Business Plan.

In this report we outline those issues and activities that have had a greater significance to the Council’s progress in promoting greater equality as well as how we met the Council’s responsibilities under the public duties contained within the Equality Act during the last financial year.

This year’s publication includes updated and information from the services we focussed on last year as well as giving examples of key areas of our work via case studies in line with the commitment made under our equality objectives.
3. Our Demographic data

Fenland has strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. Over 100,700 people live in the district (ONS: 2018), which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of people live in our four market towns of Chatteris (11,000), March (23,000), Whittlesey (13,000) and Wisbech (31,500). Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from around the country.

Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire and plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. In 20 years’ time (2038), it is predicted the population will have increased by 11% to 111,512 (ONS: 2016). We have plans in place, some of which are explained within this plan, to maximise the positive opportunities that growth brings.

Our population is also getting older. 23% of our population are aged 65 or over; above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK as a whole. (ONS: 2017). Alongside partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support they need to live happily, healthily and independently.

We also face some challenges around deprivation, particularly around education and health. We are the 80th (out of 326) most deprived area in the country, with some wards in Wisbech within the top 10% most deprived (IMD: 2015). Nevertheless, we work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.

4. Context

Following last year’s annual report on the progress of the ongoing equality work this report further updates our progress on the Strategic Equality Objectives and explores the work that is being done against the actions that sit underneath.

Despite the highly challenging financial circumstances that the public sector is operating within, during these times of austerity, the Council has still been able to make real progress in many areas of its the Equality Objectives, often through partnership working, harnessing local adaptability and integrating its work to develop a coherent approach in delivering its priorities to the community of Fenland. The equality priorities that the Council have set, in recognising that there would be future broader impacts upon services and communities as a result of the current austerity measures have gone some way through the budget development process to limit these impacts although of course cannot fully eliminate them.

5. The Equality Duty (The Equality Act 2010)

The Act places a statutory duty upon Local Authorities to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work in developing policy, in delivering services and in relation to our employees. The Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a ‘protected characteristic’. The protected characteristics are:

• Age
• Disability
• Gender reassignment
• Marriage and civil partnership
• Pregnancy and maternity
• Race
• Religion or belief
• Sex
• Sexual orientation
6. Our Approach to Equality

Our organisational approach to equality is to ensure that it is mainstreamed into key business drivers, such as the budget setting process and our approach to customer services. Equality related considerations and actions are being mainstreamed into the relevant strategies and plans, which shape our organisational approach in each of these areas, thus ensuring equality is integral to our approach and is owned across our organisation.

As a council, we are committed to providing high quality services that are customer focused. These services will be accessible, sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of all individuals, families and communities.

To this end we are continuing to publish equality related data for some of the services we deliver. Over time, we intend to collect even more service information and to strengthen the collection of equality related data across the council. We will use this data to inform service planning and development, seeking to continually improve our performance over time.

7. The Council as an Employer

As at January 2018 the Council employed 497 people (226) full time and (271) casual employees across a wide range of service areas; this excludes casual employees.

67 new employees appointed during 2018

During 2018 we received a total of 387 employment applications from people seeking to be employed by the Council.

The monitoring of cases for grievances, disciplinary and dignity at work show no indication of discrimination involving any particular equality strand. Our relatively low level of grievances reflects our approach of resolving issues wherever possible, informally at local level before they escalate.

Figures have been collected and analysed for sexual orientation and gender reassignment but have not been published because of the low number of people this relates to.

During 2018 2 women started maternity leave and 2 returned. Of these, all choose to come back to work, and no one made a request for flexible working which was granted.

No men took the opportunity to take paternity leave and 1 couple choose shared maternity leave.

- Applications received = 387
- Called for interview – not recorded
- Appointments made = 67 (“Starters”)
- Women starting maternity leave = 2
- Women returning from Mat leave = 2

- Requests for shorter hours / flexible working – not recorded. Reasons for change of hours are not recorded and could be due to a personal request or just business reasons etc.
- Shared maternity leave = 1
- Paternity leave = 0
There are effective communication and consultation mechanisms in place at all levels within the Council to ensure that the workforce is fully consulted on and informed about any issues that could concern them. The processes employed within the Council to ensure the effective and ongoing communication between Corporate Management Team, managers, employees and trade union representatives are detailed below. Any issues regarding restructures, substantial changes to roles, as well as any new initiatives/legislation affecting the function of a service are clearly communicated and consulted upon from inception with all appropriate groups. A report is then made to the Council’s Staff Committee to consider and if agreed are then implemented.

Consultation at service level is characterised by joint consultation with all staff on any service level operational issues, which are conducted on an informal and regular basis; often taking place as part of regular individual, team and/or service meetings along with service plan development workshops.

Consultation at an organisational level occurs at regular scheduled Management, Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) meetings. This group is comprised of management, trade union and staff elected representatives. These meetings cover consultation on corporate and strategic issues, as well as any staff and/or service level issues that may need to be discussed. They are held generally on a monthly basis (or more frequently if specific meetings are needed).

This framework facilitates the information and consultation process at all levels with the workforce and trade unions, and is so structured and designed to provide an inclusive and consistent approach throughout the Council. Whilst structure is important, it is recognised that there will, at times, be a need for flexibility in approach, and this should be discussed and jointly agreed in each case.

The Council also works to Core Competencies which cover:

- Customer Focus
- Effective Communications
- Teamwork and Co-operation
- Respect & Dignity for all
- Leading, Managing and Responding to Change

As well as Management competencies:

- Coaching and Developing People.
- Effective Leadership.
- Managing People.
- Managing Performance.
- Strategic Awareness.

These competencies link to the Council’s Core Values which are:

- Value, Respect and Dignity for all.
- Adopt a positive ONE TEAM approach.
- Listen, talk and take action.
- Understand, learn and improve.
- Encourage and Support.
- Service Excellence.

All staff and members of the Council are aware of what is expected from them as either Council employees or those representing the Council. To enhance and reinforce their understanding of this the Council has developed a new updated Employee Handbook. This has been circularised, and is available on the intranet.
8. Staff Groups

The Council has an **Equality Service Champions Group**. This group provides a place for staff working on equality issues within their own service to gain support, share information, and good practice and promote equality and diversity awareness.

The Council places a strong emphasis on equality analysis. When developing policies and making decisions, the Council will make sure that those making the decisions know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can’t then we should think carefully about whether we need to make the change to achieve a legitimate aim.

The Group is run by the Council’s Diversity Manager who coaches and mentors equality champions to enable them to undertake their roles.

This group is long established and meets on a regular basis. It also provides a pool of expertise and experience to develop Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments and review policies and projects with regards to equality analysis/ issues. An example of this groups work is given later in this report.

9. Staff Self – Service

We have encouraged employees to update their personal profiles and update their records via our self-service HR database– including updating their equalities information. We hope this will help us provide more accurate data and analysis on existing staff to inform our workforce analysis.

To enable and assist staff they have access to use Read & Write software.

Read & Write is a widely used software that helps everyone in the workplace to process on-screen information in their preferred style including; speak aloud, dyslexic spell checkers, on screen highlighters, mind maps, screen tints and offers many more tools to improve accuracy and productivity.

10. Equality & Diversity training

The Council offers all staff and members the opportunity to refresh and update their equalities knowledge and skill set via training courses.

A comprehensive training programme for customer facing staff is run annually, and is open to anyone within the Council to attend. More bespoke equality and diversity courses can be run at any time to meet the identified needs of individual teams or services.

This training approach enables staff to understand the general Equality Duty and thus be conscious of their duties and obligations, and to help them develop a comprehensive approach to meet these duties.

11. Raising and Maintaining Awareness

It is important that staff and elected members are aware of the general equality duty and how to comply with this so that this is considered in our work. To enable this we ensure that we provide appropriate information and use a combination of methods to build and maintain awareness including:

- Briefings for elected members;
• Briefings for Corporate Management Team;
• Information to key contacts within the Council;
• Items and updates in our staff briefings
• Inclusion with Overview & Scrutiny reviews.

Equality issues are an item that is regularly discussed at team meetings within a range of service areas within the Council, which ensures that it remains a live issue. It is also reinforced through the work that is undertaken as part of Customer Service Excellence accreditation

12. Elected Members:

Elected members benefit from equalities training. These sessions highlight key equalities and human rights legislation, the diversity of the district and the actions that individuals and the Council can do to promote integration and cohesion.

Training is focused on the role elected members have, and how to ensure that equalities matters are considered when making any decision.

13. Diverse Communities Forum

The Council, in conjunction with other public, faith, community and voluntary sector partners from the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum and meet bi-annually. These events form part of our consultation process for establishing the equality objectives for the year ahead; update all on progress against our Fenland-wide cohesion action plan to discuss the particular challenges and benefits of providing public, community and voluntary services in the district.

The action plan is driven and performance managed through a core group of the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum and primarily focuses on positive community outcomes.

14. What’s Breaking

What’s Breaking is the Council’s information and alert mechanism for all staff engagement which is one method the Council employs to communicate with our staff.

It is an inclusive mechanism to communicate and disseminate information, news and updates to all areas of the workforce, and compliments other established communication mechanisms, such as 1-2-1 and team meetings, staff briefings, notice boards, e-mail, newsletters, policies and procedures, briefing notes, training courses and FAQs, intranet and internet. Staff who do not have access to email and the intranet receive printed versions via their manager.

15. Staff Sessions (Called Horse’s Mouth briefings)

These are information sessions delivered to all staff at each Council office, Leisure and Business centre at varying times by the Chief Executive on a regular basis. These sessions include a great deal of information, including:

• Council Achievements;
• Council Priorities;
• Forthcoming Challenges;
• Budget Information;
• Workforce updates;
• Open forum and Q & A sessions.
There is also the opportunity for staff to submit questions/comments in advance that they would like a response to. Alternatively, they can submit questions afterwards on anything that was raised or prompted and these will be responded to.

**16. Staff Survey**

Staff surveys were developed and embedded as an additional method to capture and measure what is really important to our staff, namely:

- the frequency and level of communication they receive;
- their ability to raise issues with their manager;
- if they get a chance to develop their skills;
- how they contribute to the service plan and corporate business plan;
- If they get feedback from their manager.

It is an electronic survey which is sent to each employee, which will consist of a set of questions drawn from the Council's annual appraisal process, (called Springboard) Investors in People standards, and the Customer Service Excellence criteria.

The survey also seeks to capture additional equality information from individuals (E.g. gender, age, ethnicity, length of employment, part- or full- time status, location etc.).

All survey responses and findings also provide supporting evidence for both Investors in People and Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

Despite a number of difficult years coping with reducing budgets, the results of this year’s Staff Survey demonstrate that staff still feel valued and are committed to their work. Some of the headline statistics include:

- 84% of staff are proud to work for Fenland District Council
- 93% of staff feel committed to their work here at Fenland District Council
- 87% are clear about what they are expected to achieve in their job
- 90% of staff feel they make a positive contribution to the success of the Council

Of course there are still some areas that we want to continue to develop and improve, but we should all be pleased and proud of this response, which reflects on how we all feel about working here at Fenland.

This year again, the survey asked staff to identify three things that they felt would improve the quality of life at Fenland District Council, we also asked for views on the future of Local Government. A free text format was provided for all staff to respond to this and to also submit any other comments they might wish. We received an encouraging number of responses to this question with some consistent messages and themes from across the Council.

These comments have now been fully reviewed, and we have identified four key themes to be taken forward and an Action Plan created to further improve working at Fenland District Council.
17. Gender Pay and Occupational Segregation Information

Gender Pay Gap legislation (developed by the Government Equalities Office) introduced in April 2017 requires all employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap for workers in scope as of 31 March 2017.

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women. As a concept it is different from “equal pay” which deals with any pay difference between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or jobs of equal value.

Fenland District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees and has a clear procedure to ensure employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex or any other protected characteristic.

What do we report on?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean gender pay gap</td>
<td>The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median gender pay gap</td>
<td>The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean bonus pay gap</td>
<td>The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median bonus pay gap</td>
<td>The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus proportions</td>
<td>The proportions of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile pay bands</td>
<td>The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands</td>
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</table>

Overall the gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the median (actual midpoint) basic pay of men and women expressed as a percentage of the median basic pay of men:

\[
\text{Gender pay gap} = \frac{\text{Median pay men} - \text{Median pay women}}{\text{Median pay men}} \times 100
\]
Workforce Profile

There were 397 employees (headcount) working on the snapshot date.

Average weekly hours worked:

- **Female:** 27 Hours
- **Male:** 32.5 Hours
**Results**

**Mean:** Average hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference:

- £13.73 per hour
- £14.65 per hour

**Mean Pay Gap – 6.3%**

**Summary:**

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2017, the Gender Pay Gap nationally was 18.4%. Specifically for ‘Local Government Administrative Occupations’ there was a 15.9% Gender Pay Gap.

**Median:** Middle hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference between:

- £12 per hour
- £12 per hour

**GAP**

- 92p
- 6.3%

**GAP**

- Zero
- 0%
Median Pay Gap – 0%

Pay Quartiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartiles</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of employees in the <strong>lower quartile</strong> pay band</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of employees is the <strong>lower middle quartile</strong> pay band</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of employees in the <strong>upper middle quartile</strong> pay band</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of employees in the <strong>top quartile</strong> pay band</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
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Bonus Pay Gap

Fenland District Council does not operate any performance related pay or bonus scheme and therefore has no bonus gender pay gap.

Bonus Gap – 0%

Analysis of Data

Currently there is no published information to define what level of pay gap is regarded as a cause for concern, the gender pay gaps identified are relatively small, and are significantly less than the statistics reported by the ONS (shown above).

Although there is no median gender pay gap there is a mean gender pay gap of 6.3%. This would suggest that ranges of pay are spread fairly equally but the average pay for men is higher. This is likely to be due to a higher proportion of men receiving higher levels of pay, as evident in the upper levels of the top quartile.

The results are also likely to be due to workforce distribution across the pay bands and length of service amongst the male employees. A further reason could be that there are a higher proportion of operational staff that are male within the organisation.

Fenland District Council has well established Job Evaluation schemes in place and has undertaken a comprehensive review of pay and allowances to ensure there is no disparity.
Recommendations

Although there is no significant gender pay gap identified, Fenland District Council remains committed to ensuring ongoing robust delivery of all people policies and practices to ensure no gender bias is in place when recruiting and appointing to new roles within.

It is recommended that a further review in undertaken of these processes on regular basis to ensure the ongoing delivery of best practice. The Council will continue to monitor the gender pay gap by reviewing it on a regular basis to ensure that our current good position is maintained. We remain committed to promoting Fenland District Council as a fair and inclusive employer.

As the service sits within the Council, information on employment is collated and monitored corporately.
### Equality breakdown of workforce - 02 February 2018

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<th>BAND</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>HAY &amp; CMT (SR)</th>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>15-24</td>
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18. **Flexible Working and Work Life Balance**

The Council offers employees flexible working hours and recognises the need for employees to work flexibly, and is committed to optimising the opportunities to incorporate family friendly and flexible working practices where possible. The Council is committed to widening access to quality services through providing flexible modes of working and service delivery.

19. **The Elected Councillors**

There were 39 Councillors of the District Council representing the whole district. The last full council election was May 2015, although by elections have been held since then.

**Gender breakdown**

- Nearly 69 of Councillors are male.
- 100% of Councillors were white and none come from a minority ethnic background.

The Council does not currently hold information about the protected characteristics of its Councillors.

20. **Services Provided by the Council**

The Council seeks to “mainstream” equality into its services and functions.

Mainstreaming is an approach to delivering equality within an organisation. It is primarily a long-term strategy aimed at ensuring that equality principles and practices are integrated into every aspect of an organisation from the outset. The focus should not only be internal (mainstreaming equality principles into procedures and systems) but also external (mainstreaming equality principles into policies and customer service delivery). Mainstreaming provides a framework that facilitates and compliments, equalities legislation and other equality measures.

In simplistic terms this means integrating equality into our day-to-day work. We take equality and fairness into account in the way we go about our business when acting as an employer, when planning and providing services and when making decisions.

Mainstreaming ensures that equality becomes part of our culture. This benefits both employees and service users who know that they will be treated fairly, and contributes to a continuous improvement and better performance.

Reporting on “mainstreaming” helps us to demonstrate the ways we are fulfilling our general equality duty.

Before we design a policy, procedure or function it is important for us to understand the needs of service users, including any needs due to having a protected characteristic. This information can be used to improve service/policy design and implementation.

The Service Planning approach specifically prompts and guides services to have regard to their equality duties; both with regard to implementing the Corporate Plan and the corporate objectives which may, for example, be identified through equalities analysis in Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments.
The Council has reviewed its equalities data and impact assessments; these are refreshed annually.

We use the Customer (Equality) Impact Assessment process as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues have been considered when drawing up Council policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of the Council’s functions and employment practices.

The Council has regularly carried out and reviewed these assessments since 2002. Assessments are carried out when developing any new policy, plan or function, or making changes to an existing policy, plan or function, including the reduction or termination of a service as well as during development of the Council’s annual budget proposals.

They identify any impacts on people or groups of people who possess any of the nine protected characteristics and on people who have caring responsibilities. Existing policies are screened as part of an annual review.

Impact Assessments help ensure that our service users receive services in a fair and equitable way ensuring that all are focused on outcomes. They provide an opportunity to stop or revise a policy or function which may potentially be unlawful.

They also contain mitigating actions wherever possible to minimise any adverse impacts, as well as identifying opportunities for positive impacts such as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

We use internal and external data to provide evidence for the assessments and consult directly with service users and equalities groups to proof our findings. Impact assessments are organic documents and are developed and added to as a project progresses.

Where an impact assessment relating to a new policy has been carried out its findings is fed into any subsequent committee/cabinet reports. This ensures elected members are fully aware when considering a report of any equality issues and/or any negative and/or cumulative effects on any of the protected characteristics to better inform the decision making process.

These assessments are completed by Equality Service Champions. They help drive through the implementation of the Council’s equality commitment and monitor service delivery outcomes within their service area. Guidance, support and advice are offered to those who may need assistance during the process. They are people from within the Council who represent each service team.

The Council places a strong emphasis on equality analysis. When developing policies and making decisions, the Council will make sure that those making the decisions know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can't then we should think carefully about whether we need to make a change to achieve a legitimate aim.

The Council can and do consult with a range of community groups, via the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum, around specific issues when completing equality analysis. These groups are often consulted when developing and refreshing policies, strategies, procedures and functions and act as the conduit to our vulnerable and minority communities for our annual consultation around the Councils Corporate Business Plan.
All of the Council's equality analysis is publicly available via the Council website and are available in a variety of formats on request. We welcome people to challenge any equality analysis carried out by the Council.

As part of the Comprehensive Service Review work that has been undertaken to ensure the Council meets the savings targets expected by Central Government. Customer Impact Assessments have been undertaken to consider the impact of the savings projects on the community in relation to the Equality Act taking mitigating action as required.

21. Procurement

The Council's procurement process of acquiring goods, works and services from third parties and in-house providers reflects the Council's commitment to equality and diversity. The Council will seek to ensure that all external contractors that may deliver services on behalf of the Council embrace the principles of equality and diversity and can demonstrate this to us.

22. Working with Communities

The Council recognises the decisions it makes and the services it delivers will be used by different people in different ways. Therefore the Council aims to involve all communities in the decisions which affect them. All of our current consultations are on our website, and advertised through all of the usual methods of communication including Twitter, newsletters and direct action to vulnerable and minority groups including hard copies in community languages placed in community hubs and consultation events.

The Council has many ways of knowing its communities and collects equality related information from many sources to build a picture of our communities. This includes national, regional and local data and helps the Council to know what services our community require. This part of the report contains information and case studies about some of the protected characteristic groups within Fenland. The case studies demonstrate some ways the Council and its partners are working to meet its equality duties.
23. **Our Equality Objectives and our Progress**

**Summary of Corporate Priorities**

In our business plan [http://www.fenland.gov.uk/aksfenland/images/att5972.pdf](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/aksfenland/images/att5972.pdf) 4 priorities, Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation support delivery of our duties relating to the Equality Act 2010:

**Communities**
- Support vulnerable members of our community
- Support our ageing population and young people
- Promote health and wellbeing

**Environment**
- Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service
- Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and our streetscene
- Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and promoting social cohesion

**Economy**
- Attract new businesses and jobs, and support existing businesses in Fenland
- Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination
- Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland.

Underneath each of these priorities are key focus areas which link with supporting our Equality act objectives e.g. under environment’s priority which references “social cohesion” there is a sub priority to:

“Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland Community Cohesion Strategy:

As well as this under “Quality Organisation” it states:
- Equalities - Meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act through our core service delivery and publish on a yearly basis our annual report.”

24. **The following projects and initiatives give a flavour to the work we do or enable through partnership working.**

**Case Study - Welfare Reform Advice Intervention**

The Fenland Diverse Community Forum through community partners has continued to make considerable progress in mitigating the impacts of welfare reform and building resilience amongst residents of Fenland.

We continued support for local food banks, and other “affordable” community services, and maintained our investment in Information and Advice services. We extended our work with partners offering Information Advice and Guidance to Central and Eastern Europeans as well as those local people that need support, specifically to signpost people to services and support those clients who were facing a medical re-assessment process as part of the changes.
The administration of Discretionary Housing Payments in Fenland has been acknowledged as good practice and an important part of our approach to crisis management.

All partners worked together to understand the impact of sanctions and suspension of benefits so that early identification can trigger support.

The Fenland Diverse Communities Forum which has around 30 active members sharing information on their services and areas of speciality so the people of Fenland are signposted to those services best able to support their current need. This raised awareness of financial exclusion and provided staff with basic knowledge to identify members of the public they meet on a day to day basis and point them towards help and advice.

**Case Study –**

**Grant Funding**

Community cohesion in Fenland is an objective shared by all agencies in the District. No one organisation or agency can achieve this single handed, nor can any legislation make this happen.

Therefore, we work in partnership to reduce community tension and develop cohesion. To this end we have established a Diverse Communities Forum, made up of partners from the statutory, community, voluntary and faith sectors that work together to understand our community.

The work of the Forum is recognised by the Ministry Housing Communities Local Government and East of England Local Government Association as best practice, with the outcomes achieved, relevant and respected possibly due to its reputation for delivery.

This reputation has given added value to the grant bids made.

**Approved Grants so far**

Since February 2017 the Diverse Communities Forum worked with partners to obtain funding from the Controlling Migration Fund. A breakdown of the successful bids and a short overview of each are reproduced below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Grant Overview</th>
<th>Funding achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Outreach Service</td>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>A project to tackle homelessness and the impact it has on local communities, with an aim of reducing the problem of preventing people from returning to live on the streets</td>
<td>£86,400 2 year project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisbech Emergency Night Shelter</td>
<td>Ferry Project</td>
<td>Maintaining &amp; extending the emergency night shelter in Wisbech, to provide an alternative to sleeping rough</td>
<td>£134,897 2 year project</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMO Enforcement &amp; Licensing</td>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>This additional resource will enable the Council to get a grip on the private rental market in Wisbech and take a street by street approach to identifying and</td>
<td>£196,095 2 year project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street Drinking Outreach Work in Peterborough and Fenland</td>
<td>Cambs County Council</td>
<td>The County Council will share the grant with partners to recruit two EU speaking alcohol outreach recovery workers, to mitigate the impact of alcohol misuse in Wisbech and Peterborough.</td>
<td>£283,347</td>
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<td>Modern Day Slavery (MDS) Support</td>
<td>Rosmini Centre</td>
<td>Concerns and issues around MDS were recently discussed at a summit called by Steve Barclay MP. Issues around MDS are often invisible and difficult to detect. A number of people have been identified as being exploited and victims of MDS. There is a culture of mistrust of authority meaning that other people do not complain due to fear of retaliatory action. This project aims to address these issues.</td>
<td>£136,000</td>
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<td>Information pack of social media resources</td>
<td>Cambs &amp; Peterborough Public Health</td>
<td>It is clear from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Migrant) findings that the health and wellbeing needs of migrant &amp; indigenous communities in areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are compromised by a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of how various public sector systems and services work. It is expected that a suite of between 16 &amp; 24 information films will be developed and hosted on a self-contained website, Facebook page and YouTube channel to address these concerns.</td>
<td>£94,200</td>
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<td>Grow it, Cook it, Share it &amp; Compare</td>
<td>ACCESS (formerly KLARS) Groundwork East Clarion Housing</td>
<td>Recruiting volunteers to be involved in practical green skills from all backgrounds to aid cohesion and integration. The course will aim to give a minimum of 6 long term unemployed residents help into meaningful employment and up to 80 families with help to understand UK cultures or the social background of the migrant community.</td>
<td>£108,394</td>
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<td>Parallel Lives Project</td>
<td>East of England LGA</td>
<td>Communities that lead parallel lives will never integrate into the community/ area. This leads to tensions and potential conflicts. Roma do not readily integrate into local communities/ groups or even people from their own or other Eastern European communities. This project will undertake research into Roma lifestyle, culture and how they are dispersed across the region. From this work we, other councils, partners and Government can identify better ways to engage and deliver services.</td>
<td>£157,603</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Cohesion built through Sports &amp; Physical Activity</td>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>This project will address community cohesion in the District by tackling inequalities and social isolation in Wisbech</td>
<td>£140,000</td>
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<td>Migrant Worker Statistical data</td>
<td>Rosmini Centre</td>
<td>We need to understand the makeup and needs of an ever changing community. Local employers have expressed their concerns regarding procurement of</td>
<td>£119,500</td>
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<td><strong>labour post – BREXIT</strong> and we therefore need to engage with all to incorporate information including: peak times of the year for seasonal workers, numbers of seasonal workers required, accommodation and transport provision and recruitment practices. This pilot could be built on and shared by the NFU using the toolkits that this project will develop.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bi-lingual Advisor and Basic English language project</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rosmini Centre</strong></td>
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<td>The project is in two parts:</td>
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<td>1) Recruit &amp; train volunteer bi-lingual advisors with the relevant language skills and cultural knowledge reflective of the local communities providing a multilingual support service to support members of the local community to engage with statutory/ voluntary organisations in Fenland</td>
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<td>2) Provide volunteers to support members of the settled and migrant communities to improve English Language skills, gain qualifications relevant to the work available in the area &amp; improve knowledge around child care and safeguarding.</td>
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**Government-funded sports project will boost community cohesion**

A new project using sport and physical activity to boost community cohesion in Wisbech is being launched by Fenland District Council with £140,000 of government funding.

The authority has received a grant from central government’s Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) to launch a new programme aimed at bringing migrant and local communities together, while improving residents’ health and wellbeing.

Working alongside Clarion Housing and key charity and volunteering services, the project will focus on providing tailored sports and physical activity provision to low income workers aged 30-55 – comprising of around 10,000 migrant and 5,000 British workers.

It will form part of a whole system approach aiming to improve the lives of low-income workers locally and build on a number of other CMF-funded projects in the district helping to alleviate pressures on local services from migration and aid social integration.

Engagement with this working community has revealed high levels of inactivity, but 90 per cent of those surveyed would like to be more active if there were the right opportunities.

The project aims to overcome the main barriers identified to being active, such as long working hours, and create a programme of sport and physical activity which fits their lifestyles and reflects their income.

A number of approaches to engage the target audience will be tested, although early findings showing the audience are at the “ready to take action” stage of behaviour change.
Sport and physical activity provision will be delivered in both workplaces employing high numbers of migrant workers and in the community, with migrants and local residents being encouraged to work together to come up with ideas that meet their needs.

The project will also form a fundamental part of the Wisbech 2020 Vision to regenerate the town as it supports the partnership’s key priority to improve health, well-being and cohesion.

**Council secures funding to help migrants improve their English**

A new project aiming to boost community cohesion and reduce pressure on public services by improving the English of Fenland’s migrant population is being launched thanks to £110,500 of government funding.

Cash from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will be used to run English language courses in Wisbech and recruit, train and manage volunteer bi-lingual advisors to provide a migrant support service.

Fenland District Council, working in partnership with the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire County Council, other statutory and voluntary organisations and employment agencies, has received £110,500 over two years for the Bi-lingual Advisor and Basic Language Project.

The project will improve migrants’ English language skills, help them to gain basic qualifications relevant to work in the area, improve their knowledge of legislation and help them to access local services.

Although poor language skills do not have a big impact on migrants’ day-to-day living, it causes huge problems with integration and interaction with local communities.

The common use of Russian between Eastern Europeans leads them to believe there is little need to learn English, creating community tensions, distrust and frictions.

The issues are evidenced locally in a number of ways, including a growing number of crisis interventions, particularly around the safeguarding of children. Driving offences are committed due to poor knowledge of the law, and there is a high demand for costly translation services.

Migrants seek often medical help from Accident and Emergency departments when they could have been treated more efficiently and cost effectively by a GP, and a misunderstanding of the UK’s tax system, national insurance and benefits can cause employment and accommodation issues and in some cases, exploitation.

The project would be undertaken by the Rosmini Centre, which has more than 4,000 migrant workers on its database, in partnership with education, social and health care providers in the Fenland area and government agencies including HM Revenue and Customs.

It would recruit 20 volunteer bi-lingual advisors, who would support migrants with telephone calls and paperwork regarding any aspect of living and working in Fenland and help them with various issues, including childcare.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses would be provided, leading to basic qualifications such as first aid, health and safety in the workplace, safeguarding children, and food and hygiene.

The courses would also be run on a drop-in basis to fit around shift work.
**Funding announced for migration research project**

A multi-agency project to better understand migration in Fenland and help the district prepare for post-Brexit challenges has received £119,500 of government funding.

Fenland District Council has received funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to lead a migrant research project in partnership with the police, fire service, ACCESS (Migrant Support), the National Farmers’ Union (NFU), homeless charity The Ferry Project, Clarion Housing and the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech along with county, district and town councils.

The Migrant Worker Statistical Data project will help partners to fully understand the makeup and needs of Fenland’s migrant population, assess the impact of migration on ever-changing communities, and plan ahead for any new migration to the area.

A pilot initiative, the project would also develop a data gathering toolkit which would be shared nationally by the NFU, enabling other organisations to undertake similar research.

The grant comes from the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) and will underpin CMF projects Fenland District Council is already delivering to tackle migrant homelessness, street drinking in Wisbech, rogue landlords and poor privately-rented homes.

The majority of work undertaken by migrants in Fenland is agricultural, agri-manufacturing and seasonal, with most of the existing data relating to workers who are legitimately employed and registered with HM Revenue and Customs or living in registered HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation).

But the true number of migrant workers is not known, as many are invisible to statutory organisations.

Many are subjected to abuse and exploitation, along with other forms of Modern Day Slavery such as sham marriages and prostitution. They sometimes live in dire and dangerous conditions, frequently overcrowded without basic safety standards in place, and can be evicted with force when no longer required for work, resulting in rough sleeping.

They also have a cultural mistrust of authority and decline to engage with statutory bodies for fear of reprisals if they made a complaint against their exploiters.

Partners hope the two-year research project will create an accurate record of migrant workers for the first time, with the data gathered enabling them to address existing issues and plan future service provision in the run up to and post-Brexit period.

Data gathering would be community-led to encourage engagement, via partners where migrants access support, including the Rosmini Centre, ACCESS, Ferry Project and Clarion.

Local farmers, employers and agencies would also be contacted to record numbers of seasonal workers, migrant nationalities and accommodation and transport provision, as well as recruitment practices looking at how and where migrants are being recruited from.

Partners believe local farmers would engage with the project having expressed concerns about the procurement of labour post-Brexit.

The project will work closely with the NFU to identify areas of concern and explore ways in which the data gathered could be used to support farmers long-term.