



# Consultation on Lewes District Council's equality objectives: consultation report

5 January 2018

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## **Introduction**

Between 7 November to 15 December 2017 we carried out a public consultation over the proposed equality objectives of Lewes District Council. This report details how we conducted this consultation and gives a summary of the responses. This consultation was carried out in parallel with a consultation on Eastbourne Borough Council's equality objectives, the report of which is available to download from [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/consultations).

## **Background**

Lewes District Council has a responsibility and commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it (for example by meeting specific needs; minimising difficulties faced or encouraging participation in public life); and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

### **Protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.**

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation

### **Our equality objectives**

Under the act, we are required to publish the council's equality objectives. These objectives set out how we will ensure we comply with our equality duties. Our current equality objectives were set in 2012. We have reviewed these and are now proposing a new set of objectives for both councils which bring the separate objectives together.

## **Proposed equality objectives of Lewes District Council**

**Objective 1:** We will ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do and that good practice is embedded in the councils' culture and work. We will do this by:

- ensuring fair recruitment and staff development practices are in place
- developing consultation and engagement opportunities and supporting local communities to have a greater say in the way we design our services and make decisions about the future of the Eastbourne and Lewes district
- establishing an effective shared Equality and Fairness review process across both councils
- providing translation and interpreting services to meet local needs
- ensuring all councilors and staff receive appropriate learning opportunities so that good practice in equality and diversity is embedded in the culture and work practices of the organisation.

**Objective 2:** We will build respect and understanding across our communities by working with them to tackle prejudice, discrimination and hate crime. We will do this by:

- promoting equality and fairness in our work with voluntary and community organisations through community networks and training in liaison with voluntary sector partners
- engaging with representatives of protected groups in Eastbourne and Lewes district
- working with partners in the Safer East Sussex Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Prevent Board, and Safeguarding Adults Board on counter terrorism, hate crime, modern slavery, human trafficking, domestic abuse and child exploitation.
- delivering the councils' responsibilities for Prevent and Protect.

**Objective 3:** We will promote fairness and accessibility. We will do this by:

- developing and implementing an access policy covering the councils' buildings
- ensuring relevant staff are trained and confident in responding to customer enquiries relating to access issues
- ensuring proposed developments, replacement and refurbishment of council properties are discussed in liaison with representatives of disabled people and their organisations.

## **Key findings**

- We received 51 responses to the consultation. 43 of these were from individuals, 8 were from organisations.
- The majority of those who responded agreed with the objectives overall.
- The percentage of those who agreed with specific actions detailed under each objective ranged from 79% to 92%.
- Based on the comments made some respondents did not think the proposed actions went far enough, whilst others felt the council should not prioritise some of the actions.

- Two responses were received via email. One email response was from an organisation and recommended an additional objective under Objective 2 “We will do this by working to improve the councils’ understanding of the needs of different communities through effective community profiling, consultation, liaison and involvement.”
- One email response was from an individual whose comment referred to the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

## **How we consulted**

- We carried out a public consultation from 7 November to 15 December 2017 in Lewes district.
- We published a consultation page on the council website which included information about the Equality Act 2010 and the council’s equality duties under the act and the draft equality objectives.
- We provided an online survey for respondents to provide their feedback and made the offer of providing the consultation information available as paper copies and alternative formats and languages on request.
- We also invited responses in writing by email and in hard copy.
- Paper copies of the consultation information and survey were requested by Newick Parish Council.

## **How we publicised the consultation**

- We issued a press release to the local media which resulted in coverage in the Sussex Express.
- We promoted the consultation through our social media channels including twitter and facebook throughout the duration of the consultation period.
- We sent an email alert to our consultation email subscriber mailing list at the beginning of the consultation and one week before it closed.
- We emailed a number of relevant community groups including; the Seaford and Newhaven Access Group, the Lewes Area Access Group, East Sussex Disability Organisation, Seahaven seniors, East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People, Lewes Seniors and hearing issues, Tenants of Lewes District, Lewes District BME seniors group, 3VA, the Joint Transformation Equality and Fairness External Steering Group, the Lewes Equalities Working Group, Age Concern UK and the East Sussex Equality Involvement Network.
- We promoted the consultation to Lewes District Council members through the Members First internal newsletter.
- We encouraged staff to take part in the consultation by including an article about it in Council Briefing, the council’s internal staff newsletter.

## Next steps

- This report will be submitted as an appendix of a report to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> February along with an Action Plan for 2018.
- Several respondents highlighted the importance of equality training for staff and council members. This will be incorporated in the Council's Equality Action Plan 2018.
- Three people commented that statements must also include non-physical disabilities. All references made to disabled people in the Council's policy and practices are based on the definition set out in the Equality Act which covers those who have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- Other suggestions included the need to ensure that people with literacy problems and those who are not IT confident continue to be able to access council services by phone and/or in person. This is in line with the Council's existing policies and approach. We will continue to provide telephone and face to face services to customers requiring these.
- Of those respondents who made negative comments about the objectives, two disagreed with the council providing translation services. The Council will continue to offer this where appropriate and needed in line with our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Two respondents saw the council's involvement with work on Prevent as controversial. As District and Borough councils are identified as sharing responsibility for the Prevent duties under the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 to work in partnership, we will continue to work with the lead Prevent authority and with other relevant agencies through the Safer East Sussex Partnership and Prevent Board.

## Summary of responses

<b>Objective 1: We will ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do and that good practice is embedded in the councils' culture and work. We will do this by:</b>				
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Ensuring fair recruitment and staff development practices are in place.	89.4% (42)	8.5% (4)	2.1% (1)	47
Developing consultation and engagement opportunities and supporting local communities to have a greater say in the way we design our services and make decisions about the future of the Eastbourne and Lewes district.	91.3% (42)	4.3% (2)	4.3% (2)	46
Establishing a process for the way we	82.6%	15.2%	2.2%	46

**Objective 1: We will ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do and that good practice is embedded in the councils' culture and work. We will do this by:**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
review the equality and fairness of council decisions shared across Eastbourne and Lewes district	(38)	(7)	(1)	
Providing translation and interpreting services to meet local needs.	78.7% (37)	12.8% (6)	8.5% (4)	47
Ensuring all councillors and staff receive appropriate learning opportunities so that good practice in equality and diversity is embedded in the culture and work practices of the organisation.	83.0% (39)	10.6% (5)	6.4% (3)	47
			answered	47
			skipped	2

Do you have any comments about this objective? (25)

Comment themes:

- Equalities training is important (5)
- I would like further information and clarification (3)
- Statements against the objective (3)
- The council should not spend money on translation services (2)
- Statements in support of the objective (2)
- Consultation papers should be made available in British Sign Language (1)

**Objective 2: We will build respect and understanding across our communities by working with them to tackle prejudice, discrimination and hate crime. We will do this by:**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
Promoting equality and fairness in our work with voluntary and community organisations through community networks and training in liaison with voluntary sector partners.	85.1% (40)	10.6% (5)	4.3% (2)	47
Engaging with representatives of protected groups in Eastbourne and the Lewes district.	83.0% (39)	14.9% (7)	2.1% (1)	47

**Objective 2: We will build respect and understanding across our communities by working with them to tackle prejudice, discrimination and hate crime. We will do this by:**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
Working with partners in the Safer East Sussex Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Prevent Board, and Safeguarding Adults Board on counter terrorism, hate crime, modern slavery, human trafficking, domestic abuse and child exploitation.	91.5% (43)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	47
Delivering the councils' responsibilities for Prevent and Protect.	85.1% (40)	8.5% (4)	6.4% (3)	47
			answered	47
			skipped	2

Do you have any comments about this objective? (18)

Comment themes:

- Other groups should also be approached (4)
- I would like further information and clarification (3)
- Negative comments about Prevent (2)
- Statements against the objective (2)

**Objective 3: We will promote fairness and accessibility. We will do this by:**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
Developing and implementing an access policy covering the councils' buildings.	91.1% (41)	6.7% (3)	2.2% (1)	45
Ensuring relevant staff are trained and confident in responding to customer enquiries relating to access issues.	89.4% (42)	10.6% (5)	0.0% (0)	47
Ensuring proposed developments, replacement and refurbishment of council properties are discussed in liaison with representatives of disabled people and their organisations.	89.1% (41)	10.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	46

**Objective 3: We will promote fairness and accessibility. We will do this by:**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
			answered	47
			skipped	2



Do you have any comments about this objective? (20)

Comment themes:

- Statements in support of the objective (3)
- Statements must also include non-physical disabilities (3)
- I would like further information and clarification (2)
- This requires too much Council resource (2)
- Council services must be accessible to disabled people (2)
- Ensure there is adequate training in place (2)

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Do you have any other comments about our proposed equality objectives?	100.00%	27
		answered	27
		skipped	22
	Comment themes:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative statement about the objectives (6)</li> <li>• Statement in support of the objectives (4)</li> <li>• The objectives are not clear or specific enough (2)</li> <li>• Socio-economic factors should also be taken into account (2)</li> </ul>		

**Are you responding to this consultation as:**








			Response Percent	Response Total
1	An individual		85.71%	42
2	An organisation or group		14.29%	7
			answered	49






Are you responding to this consultation as:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
		skipped	0
If you have answered 'organisation or group' please tell us its name below (7)			
1	Peacehaven Town Council		
2	Diversity Lewes		
3	Nest egg working for Women, returnships for women after a career break		
4	iContact - an autism support organisation based in Lewes www.icontactautism.org email: info@icontactautism.org		
5	Newick Parish Council		
6	Possability People		
7	DeafCOG		


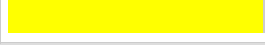
### Equality monitoring data







What is your age?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 18	0.00%	0
2	18 - 24	0.00%	0
3	25 - 34	4.76%	2
4	35 - 44	16.67%	7
5	45 - 54	19.05%	8
6	55 – 64	28.57%	12
7	65 – 74	26.19%	11
8	75 +	2.38%	1
9	Prefer not to say	2.38%	1
		answered	42
		skipped	7







What is your ethnic group?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	English		68.29%	28
2	Other British		9.76%	4
3	Irish		0.00%	0
4	Any Other White background		12.20%	5
5	White and Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
6	White and Black African		0.00%	0
7	White and Asian		0.00%	0
8	Any Other Mixed background		2.44%	1
9	Indian		2.44%	1
10	Pakistani		0.00%	0
11	Bangladeshi		0.00%	0
12	Chinese		0.00%	0
13	Any Other Asian background		0.00%	0
14	Caribbean		0.00%	0
15	African		2.44%	1
16	Any Other Black background		0.00%	0
17	Arab		0.00%	0
18	Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller		0.00%	0
19	Any Other		2.44%	1
			answered	41
			skipped	8

Do you have a long-term health problem or disability?				
			Response Percent	Response Total

Do you have a long-term health problem or disability?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		26.83%	11
2	No		65.85%	27
3	Prefer not to say		7.32%	3
			answered	41
			skipped	8

What is your gender?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		43.90%	18
2	Female		56.10%	23
			answered	41
			skipped	8

What is your sexual orientation?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bisexual		5.00%	2
2	Gay man		5.00%	2
3	Gay woman or lesbian		5.00%	2
4	Heterosexual or straight		70.00%	28
5	Prefer not to say		10.00%	4
6	Other (please specify):		5.00%	2
			answered	40
			skipped	9
Other (please specify): (2)				
1	no questions on trans identities above - why not?			
2	Straight			

What is your religion?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	What is your religion?		0.00%	0
2	No religion		51.22%	21
3	Christian		31.71%	13
4	Buddhist		0.00%	0
5	Hindu		2.44%	1
6	Jewish		2.44%	1
7	Muslim		0.00%	0
8	Sikh		0.00%	0
9	Prefer not to say		7.32%	3
10	Other (please specify):		4.88%	2
			answered	41
			skipped	8
Other (please specify): (2)				
1	Africanist			
2	You only give options for male and female - in an equality consultation, this is inexcusable!			

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If you have any questions about this consultation, please email [BPP@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:BPP@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)