

Consultation on Eastbourne Borough Council's equality objectives: consultation report

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 Eastbourne Borough 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 Lewes District Council's equality objectives, the report of which is available to download from www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/consultations.

Background

Eastbourne Borough 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 Eastbourne Borough 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 33 responses to the consultation. 28 of these were from individuals, 5 were from organisations.
- The majority of those who responded to the consultation survey agreed with the objectives overall.
- The percentage of those who agreed with specific actions detailed under each objective ranged from 73% to 94%.
- 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 Eastbourne.
- 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.

How we publicised the consultation

- We issued a press release to the local media which resulted in coverage in the Sussex Express and Eastbourne Herald.
- 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 Disability Involvement Group, Cultural Involvement Group, the Faith Forum, Neighbourhood Panels, Eastbourne Seniors Forum, BourneOut LGBT, Age Concern Eastbourne, East Sussex Disability Organisation, East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People, 3VA, the Joint Transformation Equality and Fairness External Steering Group, Age Concern UK and the East Sussex Equality Involvement Network.

Next steps

- This report will be submitted as an appendix of a report to Cabinet on 7th February along with an Action Plan for 2018.
- Of those respondents who made negative comments about the objectives, seven disagreed with the council providing translation services. However, twenty three respondents agreed with this action and the council has legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality of opportunity and the council will provide translation where this is appropriate and needed.

Summary of responses

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
Ensuring fair recruitment and staff development practices are in place.	90.3% (28)	3.2% (1)	6.5% (2)	31
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.	83.9% (26)	9.7% (3)	6.5% (2)	31
Establishing a process for the way we review the equality and fairness of council decisions shared across Eastbourne and Lewes district	87.1% (27)	3.2% (1)	9.7% (3)	31
Providing translation and interpreting services to meet local needs.	74.2% (23)	22.6% (7)	3.2% (1)	31
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.	74.2% (23)	19.4% (6)	6.5% (2)	31
			answered	31
			skipped	0
Do you have any comments about this objective? (13)				
Comment themes:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council should not spend money on translation services (5) • I would like further information and clarification (4) • Consultation papers should be made available in British Sign Language (1 organisational response) 				



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.	83.9% (26)	9.7% (3)	6.5% (2)	31
Engaging with representatives of protected groups in Eastbourne and the Lewes district.	73.3% (22)	13.3% (4)	13.3% (4)	30
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.	93.5% (29)	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	31
Delivering the councils' responsibilities for Prevent and Protect.	87.1% (27)	3.2% (1)	9.7% (3)	31
			answered	31
			skipped	0
Do you have any comments about this objective? (10)				
Comment themes:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like further information and clarification (3) 				



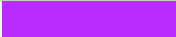


Objective 3: We will promote fairness and accessibility. We will do this by:				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
Developing and implementing an access policy covering the councils' buildings.	93.5% (29)	6.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	31
Ensuring relevant staff are trained and confident in responding to customer enquiries relating to access issues.	90.0% (27)	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	30
Ensuring proposed developments, replacement and refurbishment of council properties are discussed in liaison with representatives of disabled people and their organisations.	93.3% (28)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	30
			answered	31





Objective 3: We will promote fairness and accessibility. We will do this by:				
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Total
			skipped	0
Do you have any comments about this objective? (6)				
Comment themes:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements in support of the objective (2) • I would like further information and clarification (2) 				


	Response Percent	Response Total
Do you have any other comments about our proposed equality objectives?	100.00%	18
Comment themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objectives are not clear or specific enough (2) • Negative statement about the objectives (2) • The objectives need to be implemented and measured (2) • Council services must be accessible to disabled people (2) 	answered	18
	skipped	13




Are you responding to this consultation as:			Response Percent	Response Total
1	An individual		87.10%	27
2	An organisation or group		12.90%	4
			answered	31
			skipped	0



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		0.00%	0
4	35 - 44		11.54%	3
5	45 - 54		15.38%	4
6	55 - 64		38.46%	10
7	65 - 74		30.77%	8
8	75 +		0.00%	0
9	Prefer not to say		3.85%	1
			answered	26
			skipped	5




What is your ethnic group?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	English		76.00%	19
2	Other British		8.00%	2
3	Irish		0.00%	0
4	Any Other White background		8.00%	2
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		4.00%	1
9	Indian		0.00%	0
10	Pakistani		0.00%	0

What is your ethnic group?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
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		0.00%	0
16	Any Other Black background		0.00%	0
17	Arab		0.00%	0
18	Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller		0.00%	0
19	Any Other		4.00%	1
			answered	25
			skipped	6

Do you have a long-term health problem or disability?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		52.00%	13
2	No		44.00%	11
3	Prefer not to say		4.00%	1
			answered	25
			skipped	6

What is your gender?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		41.67%	10
2	Female		58.33%	14
			answered	24
			skipped	7

What is your sexual orientation?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bisexual		4.00%	1
2	Gay man		0.00%	0
3	Gay woman or lesbian		4.00%	1
4	Heterosexual or straight		76.00%	19
5	Prefer not to say		16.00%	4
6	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0
			answered	25
			skipped	6

What is your religion?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	What is your religion?		0.00%	0
2	No religion		32.00%	8
3	Christian		52.00%	13
4	Buddhist		0.00%	0
5	Hindu		0.00%	0
6	Jewish		0.00%	0
7	Muslim		0.00%	0
8	Sikh		0.00%	0
9	Prefer not to say		16.00%	4
10	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0
			answered	25
			skipped	6

If you have any questions about this consultation, please email BPP@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk