

Equality Objectives and Delivery Plan

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Transforming Blaby Together



Section 1 Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector general equality duty requiring public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation, and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. These requirements apply across the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

The Council's commitment to equality and diversity goes beyond the equality objectives which are set in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This document presents the Council's next three years of equality objectives covering the period 2024-2027. These objectives are not meant to encompass all the work the Council does to reduce inequality but set out what are considered to be the priorities.

We are determined to do more than just meet our statutory obligations. We promote equal opportunities, and we respect and acknowledge the diversity of staff, councillors, and the wider community we work with. It is important to mention that much of the great work carried out across Blaby District is not captured within this document, the council continues to provide services to communities (including people from the protected characteristics) that fall outside of this plan.

Building upon the work we have already done, our renewed objectives outline what we hope to achieve in the next 3 years, building upon our successes and lessons learned.

Supporting this document is our internal delivery plan, which consists of specific projects and initiatives. These projects and initiatives are managed through our Corporate Project Framework and iPlan, our Business Planning System, which ensures we maintain focus on delivering our objectives and realising tangible savings for our District.

General Equality Duty

As an authority we have a duty to comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The PSED includes a general equality duty and specific duties.

The general duty requires public bodies to pay due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the following three aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED is supported by a set of specific duties which are intended to help public bodies to carry out the above aims in a way that is tangible, transparent, and accountable.

Specific Duty

A public authority is required to:

- publish sufficient information each year to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty across its functions.
- prepare and publish specific, measurable objectives to demonstrate progress and performance against delivering the equality duty.

All of this is with due consideration to the full range of 'protected characteristic's which are:

- race
- disability
- sex
- age
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage and civil partnership (eliminating discrimination only)

Human Rights Act

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death.

They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life.

They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted – for example if a person breaks the law.

Human rights are clearly defined and protected under British, European, and international laws.

One effect of these laws is to oblige public authorities like Blaby District Council to treat everyone with dignity, respect, and fairness.

The Human Rights Act 1998 is one of the most important pieces of legislation for public authorities. It also provides Blaby District Council with a legal framework to help to ensure that our actions respect the human rights of those for whom they provide services.

The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

Right to life

- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Right to liberty and security
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Respect for your private and family life, home, and correspondence
- Freedom of thought, belief, and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry and start a family
- Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Right to education
- Right to participate in free elections.

Section 2 – Transforming Blaby Together

Transforming Blaby Together is our over-arching response to the challenges that we face as a council. The world is changing around us, and we need to adapt. Customer base, demand, and expectations are evolving, and we need to become more responsive to meet their needs. At the same time, we are challenged by reduced finances.

Our vision for the **Transforming Blaby Together** is to enable the authority to adopt a culture of continuous improvement to facilitate opportunities and different ways of working to drive operational effectiveness and build in cost effective efficiencies. Delivering an exceptional customer experience and assuring customers are at the heart of everything the council does continues to be of high priority for the authority and the transformation programme.

Transforming Blaby Together aligns our objectives for delivering our plans across the areas of:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- People and Organisational Development (POD)
- Customer Insight and Engagement (CIEE)
- Transformation, Projects, and Digital (TPD)

Centered around four key themes:



Under each of these themes we explore our aspirations for the future, consider what needs to be done (our commitment) and create delivery plans, to ensure that Blaby District is a great place to live, work, and visit.

Section 3 – Customers At Our Heart

Our Aspirations

Our customers are our residents, communities, and local businesses, we place them at the heart of everything we do to ensure that Blaby District is a great place to live, work and visit.

We believe that our customers should be able to access our services with ease, irrespective of the method they choose to contact us. We recognise that our customers' expectations and preferences are changing, and that time is valuable. We are one organisation and without needing to know or understand how the Council is organised our services, information and advice should be intuitive, easy to find and navigate, up to date, and accessible.

Our Commitment

One Organisation, Working Together

- We will strive to ensure our policies, procedures and services are inclusive and accessible

Understand Our Customers and Our Communities

- We will work with Councillors to engage and communicate with our customers and communities to understand what they need and want from us
- We will recognise the diversity of our customers' needs in the design our services

Our Plan

| Action | By When |
|--|---------------|
| We will reflect the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018 in the design of digital and hybrid services and provide training for relevant employees | Continually |
| In collaboration with the Communications Team, we will develop our Residents Survey to have a greater EDI focus. | February 2024 |
| We will develop our staff survey to further understand the demographic and needs of our staff in collaboration with our HR (Human Resources) team. We will also explore expansion and development of the employee EDI working group. | Ongoing |
| We will gather and analyse customer data regularly to help identify and adapt to the needs of our customers and explore reshaping our services to accommodate those needs | Continually |
| We will explore the development and utilisation customer experience groups to ensure that the services we provide are user friendly and inclusive of needs. | July 2024 |
| We will strive to ensure all our services are accessible so that regardless of anyone's personal situation, no one feels disadvantaged | Continually |

Section 4 – Prioritise Digital

Our Aspirations

The world is changing around us, our customer demand and expectations are evolving, and we need to become more responsive to meet their needs.

We recognise the increasing demand for self-service and digital access across our district, we believe that, where it is feasible and appropriate, we should enable our customers to interact with us digitally and access services directly.

Technology moves at a fast pace, and we recognise the need for us, as a council, to remain connected with new advances in technology.

Our Commitment

Make Digital Available and Accessible

- We will work with councillors, community groups and partner organisations to encourage and promote digital inclusion across Blaby District

Our Plan

| Action | By When |
|--|---------|
| We will explore developing a Digital Clinic for customers to learn basic core computer knowledge and skills and work with Parish Councils to explore an offer of accessible sessions within the Community | 2025 |
| We will explore the provision of interactive 'how to' sessions in the use of technology / systems as an enabler for staff to grow in confidence, increase access to digital platforms and upskill/increase corporate knowledge and tools | 2024 |

Section 5 – Challenge The Way We Work

Our Aspirations

Our people, as our greatest assets, are valued and committed to delivering quality services to our residents, businesses, and visitors, we recognise that ways of working have changed since 2020 and continue to learn lessons from our experience.

We understand the need to continuously review our processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are responsive to the needs of our customers.

We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of our council, embedding a low carbon culture, and supporting our residents, businesses, and community to reduce their carbon emissions.

Our Commitment

Invest in Our People and Systems

- We will develop our inclusive mindset by providing training to our people and councillors, nurturing diversity

Our Plan

| Action | By When |
|--|--------------|
| We will hold regular meetings and consultations with the council's Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Champion | Continually |
| We will streamline and digitalise the Equality Impact Assessment process and provide training to staff and councillors | January 2024 |
| We will deliver specific EDI learning and development to raise awareness related to all our priority areas and to promote behaviour change and seek to bring about greater inclusion | January 2024 |

Section 6 – Equalities Impact Assessment

- Individual projects will be assessed with respect to Equalities Impact in line with corporate policies and processes.

Section 7 – Carbon Neutral / Net Zero Benefits

- 'Net Zero' is one of the commitments cited under the 'Challenge the way we work' theme. The subsequent objectives and resulting action plans will focus on supporting the Council's ambition to be net zero by 2030, and the district net zero by 2050.
- Individual projects will be evaluated with respect to Environmental Impact in line with corporate policies and processes.

Appendices

Blaby District Council – Strategy

Objectives and Delivery Plan (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) – part of the [Transforming Blaby Together](#) Strategy.

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Document Definition / Approval & Review

A Blaby District Council strategy 'outlines specific plans and actions that are designed to achieve a longer term or overarching objective.'

Key published documents are approved for publication in line with the approval matrix illustrated in the Key Published Document Procedure.

Unless agreed by exception, key published documents must be reviewed at least **every 3 years** from the date of approval.

Significant updates/changes must also seek reapproval in line with the approval matrix.

Scope

This strategy applies to the work undertaken by Blaby District Council

Terms & Definitions

The following abbreviations are used within this document.

| Term | Definition |
|------|---|
| CIEE | Customer Insight, Experience and Engagement |
| EDI | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion |
| POD | People and Organisational Development |
| TPD | Transformation, Projects and Digital |
| TBT | Transforming Blaby Together |