

Corporate equality objectives, 2023-2024

We are required to publish one or more objectives we think we should achieve in order to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The objectives focus on issues which can help support better decisions, for example improving our knowledge of all our residents can help us to effectively target information and services. In addition, the equality objectives will underpin the Corporate Plan aims contributing to our vision to work collaboratively to deliver high quality services that support all communities in Test Valley to thrive.

Our new Corporate Plan, *A Place for Everyone – Supporting our Communities to Thrive*, was adopted in April 2023. The equalities agenda has been firmly embedded in this plan, with inclusion forming one of the Council's five strategic priorities. As such, we are retaining the May 2019-2023 equality objectives (which remain relevant and effective) for 2023-2024 whilst we develop new objectives, alongside our new Corporate Action Plan, that will reflect the council's continued commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Objective 1: To strengthen the Council's evidence-led methodology for developing new policy and strategy by developing a suite of engagement tools and clear processes that will enable the needs and views of people who share a protected characteristic to be understood.

Objective 2: To strengthen the Council's approach to understanding the experience people have of the services they receive. We will develop ways in which the views of people who share a protected characteristic are sought as part of reviewing how services are provided.

** The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as: age; disability; gender reassignment; sex; sexual orientation; religion or belief; race; pregnancy & maternity; and, marriage & civil partnership*