

**Meeting:** Cabinet / Council      **Date:** 15 April 2025 / 16 May 2025

**Wards affected:** All Torbay wards

**Report Title:** Torbay Inclusion Strategy

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Upon consideration by Council on 16 May 2025

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Hayley Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities, hayley.tranter@torbay.gov.uk

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 This report shares with Cabinet the Torbay Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan which aims to support the Council to embed inclusion across the organisation. It also includes refreshed equality objectives.
- 1.2 The report also provides feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Board for Cabinet's consideration.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 Under the Equality Act the Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which means that we need to give 'due regard' to equality. The General Duty requires us to:
  - 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, and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- 2.2 Under our Public Sector Equality Duty, we must publish one or more equality objectives every four years. Following a consultation, we last set our equality objectives in August 2021.
- 2.3 The Inclusion Strategy aims to holistically bring together the Council's work on inclusion and its equality objectives into one overarching document to support the Council to meet its

Public Sector Equality Duty. It also aims to respond to the feedback from the Council's Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge which emphasised the need for more focused strategic inclusion activity.

- 2.4 The Strategy also builds upon the work of the Racism Review and aims to foster a shared commitment to inclusion within the Council. The Strategy has been guided by the LGA's Equality Framework for Local Government and is flexible enough to meet the needs of different departments and communities.
- 2.3 The Inclusion Strategy will form part of the Council's Policy Framework. The accompanying action plan incorporates updated equality objectives (following the consultation).

### 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

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That Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 3.1 That the list of Policy Framework documents set out in Torbay Council's Constitution be updated to include the Inclusion Strategy for Torbay for 2025 - 2030; and
- 3.2. Subject to 1. above, the Inclusion Strategy for Torbay for 2025 – 2030 action plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report be approved.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Inclusion Strategy

Appendix 2: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Appendix 3: Torbay Inclusion Strategy consultation response

Appendix 4: Cabinet's response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

## 1. Supporting information

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- 1.1 In August 2021, the Council set its equality objectives. They are due to be refreshed by August 2025 as set out under the specific duties within the Equality Act.
- 1.2 The following equality objectives were set:
1. Ensure a wide range of voices are reached and heard in decision making and designing and delivering services.
    - Ensure all relevant groups are included in consultations.
    - Improve the accessibility of our events, meetings, information and communications. Strengthen our relationship with the community and encourage participation.
  2. Reduce inequalities so Torbay and its residents thrive.
    - Delivering on our Community and Corporate Plan ambition we will work to:
    - Ensure that all children are given the best start in life and families are supported.
    - Tackle lifestyle and economic issues which lead to inequality and poor health.
    - Ensure that older people age well and are physically, mentally and socially active.
  3. Consider and if approved implement the recommendations from the Torbay Racism Review Panel.
    - Maintain a legacy of the review.
    - Strengthen engagement networks.
  4. Support the diverse needs of our workforce. Our staff are one of our biggest assets and our employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with a variety of skills and knowledge. We are committed to supporting our staff and enabling them to provide the best possible service to our customers.
    - Demonstrating our Core Values, we will always be approachable, calm and respectful.
    - Create an environment where we act professionally and treat everyone with respect.
    - Ensure that policies and initiatives are in place so our staff can feel safe at work and carry out their duties without feeling bullied or discriminated against.
- 1.3 Since we adopted our equality objectives we have made progress towards achieving them. Some examples of this work has included;
- Working with our partners to deliver our Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Torbay which helps to inform the planning of future care and ensures that we respond to the areas of greatest need.
  - Launching the new Multiple Complex Needs Alliance.
  - Employing an officer whose job focuses on promoting inclusion as recommended by the Racism Review.
  - Drafting and developing our People Strategy.
  - Reviewing our inclusion training offer and commissioning additional inclusion related learning and development opportunities.

- Ensuring that policies and initiatives are in place so our staff can feel safe at work and carry out their duties without feeling bullied or discriminated against.
- 1.4 We are proud of the steps that we have taken to promote inclusion, however we are aware that further work is needed to fully mainstream inclusion across the Council and are fully committed to doing so. Our proposed equality objectives aim to support us to continue this work in a meaningful and impactful manner. See our [Annual Equality Report](#) for more detailed information on the progress we have made towards our equality objectives.
- 1.5 Our refreshed proposed equality objectives aim to support us to continue this work in a meaningful way. They are;
1. Ensure a wide range of voices are reached and heard in decision making and designing and delivering services.
    - Ensure all relevant groups are included in consultations.
    - Improve the accessibility of our events, meetings, information and communications. Strengthen our relationship with the community and encourage participation.
  2. Ensure that we embed inclusion into our procurement framework and clearly communicate our commitment towards inclusion with potential suppliers.
  3. Continue to implement the recommendations from the Torbay Racism Review Panel.
    - Maintain a legacy of the review.
    - Strengthen engagement networks.
  4. Support the diverse needs of our workforce. Our staff are one of our biggest assets and our employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with a variety of skills and knowledge. We are committed to supporting our staff and enabling them to provide the best possible service to our customers.
    - Demonstrating our Core Values, we will always be approachable, calm and respectful.
    - Create an environment where we act professionally and treat everyone with respect.
    - Ensure that policies and initiatives are in place so our staff can feel safe at work and carry out their duties without feeling bullied or discriminated against.
  5. Raise awareness of the importance of ensuring that our services are accessible.
- 1.6 Once approved the refreshed equality objectives will sit within the Inclusion Strategy. The equality objectives will be delivered through a mixture of business-as-usual activities and specific activity included within the inclusion action plan which will sit alongside the final published Inclusion Strategy.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 The options considered were:

(i) To not progress with an Inclusion Strategy or publish refreshed equality objectives.

- 2.2 This was not deemed to be a suitable option. The Council has a legal obligation to publish equality objectives. Under our Public Sector Equality Duty, it is important that we promote and fully embed inclusion. A strategic and joined up approach will help us to achieve this.

### 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 No further funding is required at this stage.

### 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 The Inclusion Strategy includes care experience and the armed forces community within the list of protected characteristics. By including care experience and the armed forces community within the list of protected characteristics and, in turn treating them as protected characteristics, there is a risk that this could cause confusion. This is because it could blur the line between groups that are included within the Equality Act as a protected characteristic, and those which are not.

### 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.2 To inform the development of the Inclusion Strategy and action plan, consultation and engagement took place with key stakeholders and community groups throughout January and February 2025.
- 5.3 An online consultation was opened on Monday 6 January 2025 and closed on 2 March 2025 to enable a range of voices to be heard and inform the final Inclusion Strategy.
- 5.4 Information about the Inclusion Strategy consultation is published on the Council's website. It has been shared via a members' briefing, emails to key stakeholders and through posts on LinkedIn. Online engagement conversations were also held with local partners/ community groups and one online session was held with Council colleagues.
- 5.4 As part of the consultation process the draft Inclusion Strategy was shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 12 February 2025. The Board made the recommendation that Cabinet be recommended to approve the draft Inclusion Strategy for Torbay for 2025-2030 subject to the following:
- Consider how the MyBay benefits can be expanded to help young Carers who do not drive, for example a free bus pass; and
  - Request that the Director of Adult Services to liaise with the local cemeteries providers to see how they have considered providing suitable provisions for all religious communities.

The Cabinet's response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are set out in Appendix 4

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

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6.1 Not applicable within this proposal.

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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7.1 No adverse impacts on climate change are anticipated.

## 8. Associated Risks

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8.1 The absence of a strategy will result in a lack of cohesion around our inclusion work, resulting in lost opportunities or duplication.

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.			
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable



Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.			
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay,	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
<b>Additional considerations</b>				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	for and care experienced children and young people.			

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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10.1 None

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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11.1 None

