

Strategic Equality and Diversity Group Draft Terms of Reference

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Aim of the Group

The Strategic Equality and Diversity Group (SEDG) has responsibility for ensuring that the Council demonstrates fairness in its delivery of services and its employment practices. It will work to develop a culture in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and offensive and discriminatory behaviour and harassment are not tolerated.

The SEDG is not a decision making body, but can refer issues to relevant Committees / Groups e.g. Cabinet, Council, CET, Scrutiny, SLT when decisions are required.

Specifically, the SEDG will:

1. Embed the promotion of equality and welcoming of diversity into Council business.
2. Monitor the quality of key impact assessments, and how assessments are used in decision-making.
3. Act as a 'critical friend' when Well-being Impact Assessments are being developed.
4. Ensure robust arrangements are in place to enable the Council to meet its general and specific duties under the Equality Act 2020 e.g.
 - Provide performance oversight of the Strategic Equality Plan (even where integrated into the Corporate Plan).
 - Provide oversight for the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (including published reports).
5. Keep abreast of latest research and developments in terms of equality via links with national bodies and the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN).
6. Have oversight of consultations on the equality theme.
7. Contribute to the overview of performance against equality objectives within Council Quarterly Performance Reports.
8. Monitor customer complaints regarding equality and diversity issues.
9. Link to the diversity and democracy suite of activities.

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Membership Roles and Responsibilities

The SEDG will consist of

- Lead Member for Equalities (Chair)
- Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets
- Diversity Champions from each of the five political groups (Labour, Plaid Cymru, Conservatives, Independents and the Green Party)
- Chair of Scrutiny Chair & Vice Chair Group.
- A representative from CET to act as Vice-Chair (Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services)
- A representative from SLT (or substitute where required)
- Communications Lead Officer
- HR Lead Officer
- Democratic Services Lead Officer
- Acting Joint Head of BIM with lead for Equalities
- Other people may be invited to attend from time to time, e.g. representatives from specific council services.

Each member of the SEDG will

- Need to understand, and be fully committed to, the values of equality and diversity.
- Be expected to act as advocates for equality and diversity in all council-related business.
- Be expected to undertake any relevant equality and diversity training.
- Be responsible for approaching their nominated substitute(s) if they are unable to attend a particular meeting. Nominated substitutes must also demonstrate the same commitment to equality and diversity as described above.

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- Be responsible for feeding back to their groups (e.g. political party) and acting only on behalf of those parties.

Administration

- SEDG will meet quarterly, and meetings will be planned in advance for each financial year. Meeting dates will be in the Council diary.
- The Chair is responsible for ensuring a manageable agenda, allowing members time to discuss and keep to time.
- No more than four agenda items for each SEDG meeting.
- Quorum for the Group will be 5 persons including Chair.
- A Forward Work Programme will be required.
- The Chair will be supported by a Strategic Planning & Performance Officer.
- Minutes will be taken at each meeting by Democratic Services. All papers will be published on Modern.gov for transparency.
- Meetings are 'closed' (invitation only).
- All reports to be submitted to Democratic Services 5 days prior to each SEDG meeting. Every effort will be made to circulate the agenda, and papers at least 4 days in advance of meetings and minutes no later than 10 working days afterwards. Members should make every effort to read and check the minutes and attend to any action required by them prior to the next meeting.
- Whilst all members will have an interest in the items discussed at meetings there may be times when it would not be appropriate for a member to be present whilst a specific item is discussed. All members will have a responsibility to declare if they have an interest which could give rise to a conflict, whether that is perceived or real.
- The Group's effectiveness will be reviewed after its first 12 calendar months of meetings have taken place, to consider whether the group is having impact and make a decision as to its future with options including: continue as is and celebrate success; adapt and improve, or cease.
- Membership will be reviewed in line with Council terms

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- Closure of the Group would be reviewed as each administration term comes to a close with this group making recommendations to Cabinet.