



**EQUALITY OUTCOMES AND MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2025-2029**

Report by HR, Strategy and Performance

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to present the draft Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for review and to seek approval for public consultation.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires all public bodies to publish equality outcomes at least every four years. Equality outcomes aim to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people's life chances, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations. The cross-cutting themes of sustainability, and fairness and equality are integral to all the functions and activities carried out by the Comhairle to deliver good outcomes and achieve Best Value.
- 2.2 To start the process of identifying and agreeing a fresh set of equality outcomes for 2025 through to 2029, an initial review of local data, existing corporate plans, improvement plans and business plans has been undertaken. Corporate Management Team, Chief Officers and officers involved in the current Report 2021-2025 have been consulted with and contributed to the process in respect of their service areas.
- 2.3 The draft equality outcomes are summarised in the Appendix to the Report. The Actions and Performance Indicators, once approved, will be input to Interplan to enable services to implement and monitor them through their business plans.
- 2.4 It is proposed to undertake a period of consultation for up to four weeks on the draft Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 with the public via the Comhairle's 'Have Your Say' consultation pages. Feedback on the draft outcomes is welcome prior to 6 January 2025.
- 2.5 Feedback will be used to inform the final draft set of outcomes before they are presented to the Comhairle for approval. The finalised outcomes are required to be published by 30 April 2025.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle:**
- (a) **Note the requirement of The Equality Act (2010) which requires public bodies to publish equality outcomes every four years;**
  - (b) **Approve the draft Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 appended to the Report for public consultation.**

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Appendix: Draft Equality Outcomes 2025-2029  
Background Papers: Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025

## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Financial	None
Legal	Compliance with the Equality Act 2010
Staffing	Improve disclosure rates and advance equalities
Assets and Property	None
<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Risk	None
Equalities	Initial Integrated Impact Assessment to be undertaken
Corporate Strategy	<p>Priority 1.1: Strengthen the local economy Delivering key services to our Island communities by supporting economic development through the Island’s Growth Deal and Crown Estate funding, identifying and supporting new energy sector opportunities, and improving digital awareness and capacity in our communities.</p> <p>Priority 2.1: Support children, families, and young people Equal Opportunity to lifelong learning and teaching with particular emphasis on Gaelic, digital skills, and new technologies, supported by access to childcare meeting the needs of working parents.</p> <p>Priority 3.1 Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life. Deliver the Comhairle’s Local Housing Strategy to ensure that residents across the Outer Hebrides have equal access to high-quality, energy efficient and affordable housing.</p> <p>Priority 4.1 Deliver Community Leadership Equality of opportunity is increased by delivering the community-led development programme, support the community planning partnership and engagement with constituents</p>
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	<p>Internal consultation with the Corporate Management Team and Chief Officers.</p> <p>Online public consultation to be undertaken</p>

## THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

- 5.1 The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) came into force in October 2010 and consolidated and replaced the previous discrimination legislation for Scotland, England, and Wales. The Act covers discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. These categories are known in the Act as “protected characteristics”.
- 5.2 The introduction of the Act set out the general duties which listed public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and 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 those who do not.
- 5.3 Subsequently the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 were introduced which set out a number of specific duties which listed Scottish public bodies are required to meet which include a duty to

report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty and the duty to publish equality outcomes and report progress.

- 5.4 In July 2016 the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) published '[Equality Outcomes and the Public Sector Equality Duty – A guide for public authorities in Scotland](#)' to assist authorities in implementing the duty as it relates to setting equality outcomes. The guidance describes an equality outcome as '*a result which you as an authority aim to achieve in order to further one or more of the needs mentioned in general duty.*' The 'results' identified should achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people's life chances.
- 5.5 This guidance confirms that the duty is intended to 'operate in conjunction with a public authority's existing corporate systems and frameworks for business planning and public performance reporting'. In addition to this, listed authorities need to involve a range of people in preparing the equality outcomes which should include policy officers, staff groups, individuals, equality groups and communities including taking reasonable steps to involve people with all the protected characteristics.

## **BEST VALUE**

- 6.1 The [Local Government in Scotland Act 2003](#) introduced a statutory framework for Best Value for local authorities. The Best Value duties set out in the Act are:
- to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirement and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
  - to achieve break-even trading accounts, subject to mandatory disclosure
  - to observe proper accounting practices
  - to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of functions.
- 6.2 The guidance is framed around the following Best Value themes:
1. Vision and Leadership
  2. Governance and accountability
  3. Effective use of resources
  4. Partnerships and collaborative working
  5. Working with communities
  6. Sustainability
  7. Fairness and equality

Sustainability and fairness and equality are cross-cutting themes that should be integral to all the functions and activities carried out by a local authority to deliver good outcomes and achieve Best Value.

## **COMHAIRLE EQUALITY REPORTS**

- 7.1 The Comhairle first published a set of equality outcomes for the period 2013-2017, followed by a second set of outcomes for the period 2017-2021 and [period 2021-2025](#). Progress against the outcomes is published every 2 years.
- 7.2 To meet the specific duties listed in line with the timescales set out in the legislation, the Comhairle are now required to publish a further set of equality outcomes for the period 2025-2029 by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

## **EQUALITY OUTCOMES**

- 8.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires all public bodies to publish equality outcomes at least every four years. Equality outcomes aim to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people's life chances, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations. Draft Equality Outcomes for the period 2025 to 2029 can be found in the Appendix to the Report.
- 8.2 Corporate Management Team, Chief Officers and officers involved in the current Report have been consulted with and contributed to the development of the new outcomes, achievements, and measures, and considerable input was received.

8.3 The Comhairle also has a duty to consult in the development of the equality outcomes. It is proposed that, following approval from the Comhairle, an online public consultation exercise be undertaken regarding the proposed outcomes. The aim of the consultation is to allow the public to share their thoughts on the draft outcomes. These views will help shape and influence the development of the final outcomes and help us to agree actions that can make a difference to people's lives.

8.4 The Comhairle is required to publish the equality outcomes for the period 2025-2029 by 30 April 2025.

## **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The Comhairle are asked to review and approve a set of draft equality outcomes prior to a public online consultation exercise. The Comhairle has a legal duty to consult on and publish equality outcomes for the period 2025 to 2029 prior to 30 April 2025.