

APPENDIX I

Corporate Equality Scheme update on actions – July 2026

RAG rating definitions:

Action on hold, significantly behind schedule with a risk of non-delivery or not started, or does not have funding.
Action changed and/or timeline revised, but on track for delivery. Further or additional funding may be needed which could cause some delay in delivery.
Action on track or completed.

Equality Objective 1: Supporting integration and cohesion in our local communities - This objective is about fostering good relations between different groups.

Action number	Corporate Equality Scheme actions	Actions update	RAG rating
1.1	Fulfilling our community leadership role.	Through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) there are regular conversations regarding community cohesion within the borough and actions to be taken to address this if issues arise. The CSP are currently exploring further projects that could be implemented which will support community leaders in undertaking their role.	Ongoing
1.2	Consulting, involving and engaging representative networks covering equality areas to help inform our future activities.	On 10 September 2026 Policy & Resources Committee agreed the SBC public consultation policy statement which sets out corporate guidance about how and when consultations are carried out as part of developing Council services, activities, policies or strategies. The Committee also agreed a public guidance document (which has been published on the SBC	Completed and ongoing

		website), a councillor guide to consultations and an officer toolkit. These guidance documents ensure that public consultations are being carried out in a consistent manner across the authority. Equality Impact Assessments should be carried out when changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function. This ensures that people with any of the 9 protected characteristics are contacted as part of the consultation process. Public consultations also include standard equality questions which help officers/members to see if any groups of people identified as being affected by proposals have not responded to the consultation and if necessary the consultation period can be extended to allow time to contact those groups.	
1.3	Continuing to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour through the Swale Community Safety Partnership including ongoing work to tackle the PREVENT agenda.	The Swale Community Safety Partnership continue to meet regularly and keeps abreast of all issues within the borough. The Community Safety Plan has been refreshed for 2026/27 with clear actions for delivery. Prevent remains identified as a clear area of focus with quarterly updates provided on emerging issues and actions.	Ongoing
1.4	To engage with schools to inform young people about democracy and the work of the council, dependant on our resources and the time available within the schools' curriculum.	Delivered a secondary schools event with the Mayor and Leader to engage students in Youth Democracy Week – this will be delivered annually.	Ongoing
1.5	Continue to encourage the number of people giving their	Project delivery funded through UKSPF including increasing volunteering, development and	Ongoing

	time to help others in Swale by supporting the voluntary and community sector when possible.	sustainability of the voluntary sector in Swale through Swale Voluntary Alliance and delivery of Loneliness project.	
1.6	Continuing to work closely with Swale's parish and town councils.	Councillors & Residents Forums (previously known as Area Committees) have been in operation since September 2020 and have proved to be an effective method of engaging with parish/town councils, individuals and groups. Swale Local Councils Liaisons Forums regularly take place online where the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Council Leader provide updates and information on borough, county and nationwide issues and parish/town councillors have the opportunity to raise issues with the CEO and Council Leader Policy updates are sent to all parish/town councils on a weekly basis providing information on borough, county and nationwide issues.	Ongoing
1.7	Continuing to support and actively promote community-led initiatives (eg. Neighbourhood Planning) which encourage communities themselves to work together to solve issues locally.	There are ongoing engagements (in-person and online) with representatives of the designated Neighbourhood Planning areas advancing their plans. The council has been discussing and offering advice on the process of plan preparation to Hernhill and a review of 'made' plans to Boughton & Dunkirk. There have also been initial	Engagement with PCs is timely and ongoing

		communications with Borden who are enquiring about the process. Future engagements on Neighbourhood Plans are lined up as the council continues to actively support areas that are looking to make progress on plan preparation.	
1.8	Continuing to use the Local Health and Care Partnership to influence the local health and public health agendas.	Changes to Health and Care Partnerships have limited recent involvement. SBC continues to work closely with Public Health and engagement with the ICB. There is a transition period due to the Local Health and Care Partnership has been replaced by Neighbourhood Health Boards.	Ongoing due to transition to Neighbourhood Health Board
1.9	Continuing to enable healthier lifestyles and physical activity through the implementation of relevant strategies.	Development of Sport England Place Partnership	Ongoing

Equality Objective 2: Supporting our vulnerable residents - This objective is about supporting Swale's more vulnerable residents, including those with either a physical or mental health disability, as well as those who are economically disadvantaged.

Priority number		Actions update	RAG rating
2.1	Continuing to support our vulnerable and disabled residents, regardless of age, through the Home Improvement Agency and Disabled Facilities Grants.	Working in partnership with Occupational Therapy, Health services, and internal housing teams to deliver timely adaptations and enable residents to live safely and independently in their homes. Ongoing collaboration ensures improved access to services and better outcomes for those most in need	Ongoing
2.2	Working in partnership to improve health and reduce hospital admissions through effective home adaptations and by improving conditions in privately rented homes.	Staying Put Home Improvement agency in place to support clients to remain in their homes.	Ongoing
2.3	Supporting eligible households with the greatest housing needs to access affordable housing.	Enablement of affordable housing through promoting sites to Registered providers and negotiating S.106 allocations. Development of Council scheme to build 51 homes in Sittingbourne has begun on site. Housing Allocations Policy and register in place to ensure equitable and needs led allocation of homes.	Ongoing
2.4	Providing assistance to households where no one living at the property is able to physically	Assisted bin collection scheme in place for vulnerable residents.	Completed and ongoing

	move their refuse or recycling to the boundary for collection.		
2.5	Championing views of people with protected characteristics, including learning disabilities and neurodivergence, with our key partners.	Use data and community intelligence gathered from residents and the VCSE to inform our work through Equality Impact Assessments and to advocate for our residents.	Ongoing – needs further development
2.6	Through the work of the Community Safety Partnership, seeking to identify and support vulnerable victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, focusing on those issues and vulnerable groups as identified in the annual Community Safety Strategic Assessment.	The Community Safety Partnership has recently refreshed its Community Safety Plan and supporting vulnerable people remains a priority. Actions are in place to best support these groups, with the Vulnerability Panel meeting quarterly to problem solve key cases.	Ongoing

Equality Objective 3: Ensuring easy, clear and convenient access to our services - This objective is about improving our customer care and working with our communities to make our services more responsive to the needs of all of Swale's residents.

Priority number	Corporate Equality Scheme actions	Actions update	RAG rating
3.1	Providing a choice of access to our services and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost (eg. electronic, phone or written letter depending on customer need or face-to-face).	On 4 November 2025, the Policy & Resources Committee the new Customer Experience Strategy and associated action plan. The new strategy aims to ensure that the culture is customer centric and that people, systems and processes facilitate the best experience possible. Relates to all actions plan items.	Ongoing Strategy document complete Governance Structure & reporting complete Recruitment complete
3.2	Making sure our services meet the needs and requirements of our customers.	On 4 November 2025, the Policy & Resources Committee the new Customer Experience Strategy and associated action plan. The new strategy aims to ensure that the culture is customer centric and that people, systems and processes facilitate the best experience possible. Relates to actions plan items specifically; Additional support for isolated and vulnerable	Ongoing Strategy document complete Governance Structure & reporting complete Recruitment complete

3.3	Improving information gathering about our customers to ensure no groups or individuals with protected characteristics are disadvantaged when accessing our services.	Equality Impact Assessments should be carried out when changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function. This ensures that people with any of the 9 protected characteristics are contacted as part of the consultation process. Public consultations also include standard equality questions to check if any groups of people identified as being affected by proposals have responded to the questionnaire. Public consultation periods can be extended if it is felt that a particular group has not had the opportunity to respond.	Completed and ongoing
3.4	Developing and implementing effective engagement methods with a variety of groups so that we can monitor and measure our services where resources allow.	Councillors & Residents Forums (previously known as Area Committees) have been in operation since September 2020 and have proved to be an effective method of engaging with individuals and groups. Equality Impact Assessments should be carried out when changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function. This ensures that people with any of the 9 protected characteristics are contacted as part of the consultation process. Public consultations also include standard equality questions which helps officers/members to see if any groups of people identified as being affected by proposals have not responded to the consultation and if necessary the consultation period can be extended to allow time to contact those groups.	Completed and ongoing

		The Communications & Policy Team send out weekly newsletters to residents who have signed up to receive them (currently 2934 residents have signed up to receive the newsletter). Links to live consultations are included in the newsletters. Links are also provided via social media.	
3.5	Treating all of our customers with respect by being polite, welcoming and making reasonable adjustments when providing services to neurodiverse people.	On 4 November 2025, the Policy & Resources Committee the new Customer Experience Strategy and associated action plan. The new strategy aims to ensure that the culture is customer centric and that people, systems and processes facilitate the best experience possible. Relates to actions plan items specifically; • Additional support for isolated and vulnerable • Corporate Equality Scheme actions review	Ongoing Strategy document complete Governance Structure & reporting complete Recruitment complete
3.6	Continuing to improve accessibility of our working practices and buildings.	On 4 November 2025, the Policy & Resources Committee the new Customer Experience Strategy and associated action plan. The new strategy aims to ensure that the culture is customer centric and that people, systems and processes facilitate the best experience possible. Relates to actions plan items specifically; • Additional support for isolated and vulnerable • Review satellite face-to-face provision	Ongoing Strategy document complete Governance Structure & reporting complete Recruitment complete

3.7	Providing Council information in accessible formats, i.e. accessible website content, large print, audio, different language and printed on different coloured paper.	On 4 November 2025, the Policy & Resources Committee the new Customer Experience Strategy and associated action plan. The new strategy aims to ensure that the culture is customer centric and that people, systems and processes facilitate the best experience possible. Relates to actions plan items specifically; • Additional support for isolated and vulnerable	Ongoing Strategy document complete Governance Structure & reporting complete Recruitment complete
3.8	Continuing webcasting of Council meetings.	All formal meetings are live webcast and recordings are available to view on the SBC website. It is also possible for people to participate in meetings remotely.	Complete and ongoing
3.9	Promoting opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local voluntary/ community organisations, and using social value criteria when assessing tenders to ensure fair competition.	Social value criteria has been included in procurement policies and members and officers are encouraged to share tender opportunities across our networks	Ongoing
3.10	Maintaining our procurement framework to continue to ensure that suppliers can demonstrate fairly their commitment to equality.	Framework is designed to continue to ensure our commitments to ensuring supplier demonstrate equality	Ongoing
3.11	Having greater consideration of people with any protected characteristic when commissioning new services.	Services design the service requirements around service users and this includes ensuring greater consideration of those with protected characteristics	Ongoing

Equality Objective 4: Promoting equality as a local employer - This objective is about ensuring that those policies and practices that affect our staff are fair and promote equality of outcome.

Priority number	Corporate Equality Scheme actions	Actions update	RAG rating
4.1	Promoting a workplace environment where all of our staff are treated with dignity and respect.	Swale Borough Council is committed to promoting a workplace environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect. This is supported through a strong framework of policies and procedures, including our Equalities and Safeguarding policies, which clearly set out expected behaviours and standards of conduct. The Council reinforces these standards through regular mandatory and role-specific training, including equality, diversity and inclusion training, safeguarding training, and management development programmes. Managers are supported to lead by example, address inappropriate behaviour promptly, and foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture. Clear reporting mechanisms are in place to ensure staff feel confident to raise concerns, which are addressed fairly, sensitively and in line with Council procedures.	Completed and ongoing
4.2	Providing training in neurodivergence to assist with everyone having a better understanding of	Neurodiversity training was made available to all staff in January 2024, delivered by an external provider specialising in neurodiversity. The training provided an overview of what neurodiversity is, the types of neurodiversity, their associated strengths and challenges, and	Completed and ongoing

	individuals different ways of working, learning, communicating, and perceiving the environment.	potential barriers neurodivergent people may face in the workplace. Further ED & Training was provided and attended by all staff in June 2025 which covered; the law around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; creating a more inclusive workplace where people can be free from discrimination and can be their authentic selves; and understanding how everyone can positively impact the culture at the Council. Neurodivergent training for managers is planned for 2026 to help managers better understand neurodivergence in the workplace and know how to support their colleague and put adjustments in place.	
4.3	Encouraging the diversity of our staff to reflect the communities we serve across all the equality characteristics, and will continue to monitor our workforce profile.	Swale Borough Council is committed to encouraging a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve across all equality characteristics. The Council monitors its workforce profile on an ongoing basis through the collection and analysis of equality data, which is reported quarterly and annually through workforce equality and gender and ethnicity pay gap reports which is reviewed by senior management. Inclusive recruitment practices are supported through recruitment and selection training for managers, including equality, diversity and unconscious bias. Workforce and recruitment data is used to identify trends and opportunities for improvement, helping to inform workforce	Completed and ongoing

		planning and ensure equality of opportunity remains embedded in employment practices.	
4.4	Ensuring continuing compliance non-discriminatory practices.	The Council ensures continuing compliance with non-discriminatory practices through clear HR policies aligned to the Equality Act 2010, supported by training for managers. HR monitors workforce and employment data to identify and address any issues, and ensures concerns are managed promptly and fairly through established procedures. Any concerns or allegations of discriminatory practice are addressed promptly and fairly through established reporting and investigation procedures.	Completed and ongoing
4.5	Continuing to provide our staff with relevant on-going training and development on equality and diversity issues.	Considerable investment was made in 2025 to provide all staff with in-person training at the Respect Everyone training. In 2026, training will be provided to managers on supporting neurodivergent staff members in the workplace. There is also eLearning available to all staff. Everyone is required to complete the Equality Act 2010 training as part of their probation and then refresh their learning every 3 years. There is also an additional programme available on our eLearning system, Equality in the Workplace.	Completed and ongoing
4.6	Continuing to provide our councillors with relevant on-going training and development on equality and diversity issues.	E & D training was scheduled but was not delivered due to low take up by Councillors. Cancellation costs and delivery of the training are being considered by the Member Development Working Group.	Ongoing