

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 029-24

Classification: Official

Title of report: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy Refresh

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

Report by: Supt Darren Deex

Chief Officer: ACO Richard Leicester

Date of report: 23rd February 2024

Enquiries to: Supt Darren Deex

1. Executive Summary

Diversity, equality and inclusion are an integral and explicit part of how we deliver the Force Plan and achieve the Police and Crime Plan priorities, underpinned by the College of Policing Code of Ethics. The strategy has been developed to recognise the work being driven around creating an inclusive culture, building trust and confidence with communities, creating a more diverse workforce and narrowing the disparity gap between protected characteristic groups. It also demonstrates how diversity, equality and inclusion fit within the wider governance structure in Essex Police, also taking into account the guidance from the NPCC Diversity Strategy and the Police Race Action Plan.

The overarching aim of the strategy is “*to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out our duties*”. The purpose of the strategy is to provide cohesion across these areas by coordinating activity, identifying learning and best practice and having robust monitoring and governance, ensuring the overarching aim is achieved of policing with the consent of all communities.

2. Recommendations

For the PFCC to note and endorse the strategy presented.

3. Background to the Proposal

The Essex Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy is underpinned by modern, inclusive values and established 'policing by consent' ethics. It aims to promote dignity for the public and the wider workforce, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, health status, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex / gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy sets out our diversity and inclusion vision, values and objectives, and has been developed in consultation with a wide range of internal and external interest groups. The Diversity and Inclusion Board chaired by the Chief Constable oversaw the implementation of the strategy, with practical implementation achieved through Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cohesion Task and Finish Working Groups, and Strategy Implementation Briefings, which were service-focussed and supported local implementation of the plan through the support of tactical delivery plans.

In summary, the purpose of our refreshed strategy is to:

- Reaffirm the force's commitment to delivering measurable outcomes in respect of the Equality Act 2010, the Policing Code of Ethics, the National Police Chiefs' Council's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025, and other strategic policies.
- Communicate the high expectation that everyone at Essex Police must take responsibility and be accountable for their part in our incremental journey towards greater diversity, equality and inclusion, for the benefit of colleagues and the communities we serve.
- Inspire an inclusive workplace culture, where police officers and police staff of all backgrounds, grades, and ranks can be themselves and have their differences positively acknowledged and aspirations enabled.
- Encourage a workforce more representative of the communities we serve by attracting and retaining diverse recruits and ensuring inclusive, talent-based career progression.
- Share our inclusive 'protect and serve all' values, win the buy-in of internal and external stakeholders, and inspire partnership working to address inequalities and disparities.
- Encourage community cohesion through the building of positive, interactive relationships, involving music, sport, cuisine, shared hobbies and skills, listening events and more.
- Improve general policing practice to ensure fairness, transparency, and dignity for all.

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

The benefits of the strategy are that it demonstrates and communicates clearly how the force is approaching diversity, equality and inclusion matters and the governance that exists around this.

5. Options Analysis

There is not a requirement to have a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy, however the risk of not doing so is that the force does not meet the three aims in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity.
- Fostering good relations between different people when carrying out our duties.

6. Consultation and Engagement

The previous Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy was discussed and commissioned for review by the Chief Constable at the Force Diversity and Inclusion Board in October 2023. Working versions were put to the board members and wider internal and external stakeholders, including the Strategic Independent Advisory Group and PFCC, to identify areas for improvement.

The strategy was developed in conjunction with the national Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025, the Police Race Action Plan and strategies from other forces which were reviewed to identify best practice.

7. Strategic Links

The strategy will work in conjunction with other key plans including the Essex Police Force Plan, the PFCC's Police and Crime Plan, the Essex Crime Prevention Strategy, the College of Policing Code of Ethics, the Government's Beating Crime Plan, the Police Race Action Plan, the NPCC's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Plan and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The strategic objectives are to:

1. **Attract, recruit, progress, and retain a more diverse workforce** that better reflects our communities to improve confidence in Essex Police.
2. **Narrow the disparity** between protected groups and non-protected groups in respect of the use of police powers such as stops, searches, and the use of force. Improve the experience of policing services without reducing the legitimate use of police powers to protect communities.
3. **Increase satisfaction and confidence** amongst protected groups, wider communities, and victims of crime. Tackle hate crime and address any complaints and concerns raised.
4. **Adopt and advance** the Police Race Action Plan and anti-racism principles.

5. **Improve inclusive culture** and increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality by nurturing an equitable and inclusive workplace culture which tackles violence against women and girls and promotes dignity for all.

This strategy is specifically relevant to the following areas of the Police and Crime Plan:

- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Improving support for victims of crime
- Supporting our officers and staff
- Increasing collaboration

8. Police operational implications

This strategy does not specifically impact on any operations. The force has developed its approach to diversity, equality and inclusion matters in the last three years and this strategy reflects and contextualises the activity that already exists along with longer term ambitions.

9. Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy. It is envisaged that the strategy will be delivered within existing resources and within the 2023/24 to 2025/26 period.

10. Legal implications

The Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) came into force in April 2011 and public authorities like the police are required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010,
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6th April 2012)
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty (from 31st January 2012)

11. Staffing implications

The strategy does not seek to bid for growth or redistribute staff in any way. It is envisaged that the strategy will be delivered within business as usual.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

The Essex Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy will have positive implications for workforce development, community relations, and legal compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Essex Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy is intended to deliver tangible outcomes in line with the Equality Act 2010.

13. Risks and Mitigations

If Essex Police does not have a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy it could adversely impact on the force's ability to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010.

There is a risk (of a poor culture, lack of public confidence and work force representation) if the strategy does not achieve its intended outcomes. In order to monitor this, the progress of the strategy will be reviewed at the Force Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Board. The flexibility exists to amend the strategy if felt by the board there are requirements to do so. An example of this is if a new influencing factor emerges.

14. Governance Boards

On 20th December 2023, the strategy was approved at the Force DEI Board.

On 10th January 2024, the strategy was approved at the Chief Officer Group.

Presented to the PFCC's Strategic Board in March 2024.

15. Links to Future Plans

Each of the five objectives (attract, recruit, progress, and retain a more diverse workforce; narrow the disparity; increase satisfaction and confidence; adopt and advance anti-racism principles, and improve inclusive culture) have clear programs of work, a broad overview of which is reflected within the strategy. These will continue to be developed and monitored through the Force Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Boards.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

Attached is the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026:



Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC’s Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.


Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 23 February 2024

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 26 February 2024

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

If ‘NO’, please give reasons for non-publication *(Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State ‘None’ if applicable)*

None

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Of Appendix?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

N/A

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

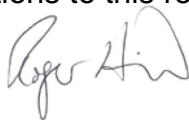
Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive / Chief Finance Officer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 22/03/2024

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
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Sign:

Print:

PECC/Deputy PECC