



# **St Albans City and District Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020**

*“An inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity and support to take part in and contribute to community life”*

November 2017

## SADC Vision

The vision for inclusion for St Albans City and District Council (SADC), supported by this strategy is:

***“An inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity and support to take part in and contribute to community life”***

Inclusion and engagement are essential to ensure that everyone in the community has opportunities to contribute to local community life. The Council recognises that some people and communities may require additional support to reach their full potential and participate in community life. By targeting our resources in these areas we will work to reduce the equalities gap.

St Albans City and District Council is committed to equality of opportunity and will actively promote this through our commissioning, partnerships and delivery of services.

The Inclusion Strategy addresses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty which was implemented in 2011. The Act aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all people whatever their background or circumstances. Delivery of this strategy requires strong, open and visible community leadership from councillors, staff at the Council and other local organisations. We will work proactively with organisations in the public, private, education, voluntary and community sectors to ensure that equality of opportunity is central to all our partnerships.

This strategy underpins the priorities in the Corporate Plan and supports individual service delivery plans by highlighting key focus areas using local data and knowledge of protected characteristics.

We are committed to ensuring information we collect about our local population is used to enhance existing provision and create opportunities for everyone to participate in community life.

We will monitor delivery of services against all protected characteristics and will target resources where gaps are identified. This will help to ensure that inequalities do not arise and we respond to the changing needs of our community.

## Our Inclusion Priorities

### What we know about the population of St Albans

There are nine specific areas (or protected characteristics) which are covered by equality legislation. These are age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. From information on census data and detailed ward profiles we have identified current priority areas for inclusion as detailed below:

**Age** - St Albans District has an aging population. The proportion of those aged 65+ increased from 15.48% (Census 2011) to 16.4% (Nomis via ONS MYPE 2014). There are high proportions of 65+ in Wheathampstead, Verulam & Redbourn wards. To enable older people to continue to have access to services and enjoy life in the district we will target resources appropriately.

**Disability** - The majority of people in the district enjoy the lowest rate of 'long term health problem or disability' in Hertfordshire. However there are high proportions of people reporting their day to day activities are limited by their disability in the areas of Sopwell, Batchwood, St Stephen and Redbourn (Census 2011). Two of these wards are within the 40% most deprived in England (Sopwell and Batchwood). We will support initiatives to improve take up of services by people with a disability and reduce health inequalities including mental health and learning needs.

**Race** - White British and Other White are the largest ethnic group in the District. The Bangladeshi population within St Albans at 1.9% (Census 2011) is the largest in Hertfordshire with the majority living in the wards of Sopwell, Cunningham and London Colney. Two of these wards fall within the 40% most deprived (Sopwell and Cunningham). We recognise that some people within these areas may require additional support to access services and be active in community life and support inclusion accordingly.

**Religion and Belief** - The majority religion is Christian (59%). However St Albans has a significant number of residents who are Muslim (3.7%) with most living within the most deprived wards of Sopwell, Cunningham and Batchwood. Linked with targeting resources in these areas we will work to ensure services are inclusive and welcoming to people of all faiths or none.

Although we have identified these as priority areas, take up of services and participation in community life will be monitored according to all nine protected characteristics. This will also be alongside priorities identified by other council strategies.

## Objectives

The objectives underpin SADC Priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and link to Performance areas in the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)<sup>1</sup>.

### **1. To understand our communities, the needs and concerns of local people, and respond to them**

Understanding and responding to the needs and concerns of the local community requires detailed and up to date data. Clear mechanisms need to be in place to ensure our service delivery and policies do not adversely affect or exclude any individual or group. To this end we will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on all our Priority Projects and updated policies whilst continuing to embed Equality.

### **2. To involve local people in decision making to ensure an active democracy**

Fully involving all our communities provides us with the best opportunity to deliver excellent services to everyone. We recognise some members of our community may require specific resources and structures in place to effectively and meaningfully participate in the decision making processes. Operating in a tiered system of local government we work with county, town and parish council partners to ensure we collectively address issues facing each local area.

### **3. To encourage and empower all local people to become involved in community projects and play an active role in community life**

We aim to encourage all sections of the District's diverse communities to be involved in local projects and initiatives. We will continue to target our work to groups who are not currently engaged or are currently underrepresented in community projects. SADC grant funding streams will be directed to voluntary and community groups who facilitate inclusion for vulnerable members of the local community.

### **4. To ensure access to information and feedback for local people and organisations**

We understand that having access to relevant, up to date information leads to our communities being better informed. This enables improved engagement and the ability of communities to run groups, events, residents associations, Parish Councils and community centres. We are aware different groups prefer and respond to different styles of consultation and consider this in planning our communications. We also strive to provide clear, coherent and consistent messages on issues affecting our whole district.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) five performance areas:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

## **Delivering the Vision in the future**

St Albans City and District Council will continue to work towards the vision of an “inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity and support to take part in and contribute to community life”. We will do this by ensuring this strategy is shared amongst all our areas of delivery and with our partners to encourage ownership and responsibility. We will respond to the changing needs of our community and adapt our plans accordingly.

As objectives are developed we will aim to deliver on all five performance areas of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). We will include targets on leadership and workforce to strive towards our ambition of embedding equality and inclusion across all areas of SADC. We will set up mechanisms to use the EFLG self-assessment<sup>2</sup> to benchmark, inform the strategic direction and develop the delivery plan for 2018 and beyond.

The Strategy will be monitored throughout its three year lifetime. It will be reviewed on an annual basis and the Delivery Plan developed in line with changing legislation, best practice and local conditions.

The Strategy sits alongside and should be cross referenced with the following policy documents, this list is not exhaustive:

- St Albans City and District Corporate Plan 2016-2021
- St Albans City and District Council Homelessness Strategy
- St Albans City and District Public Health Strategies

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.local.gov.uk/home/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/3476575/ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/home/-/journal_content/56/10180/3476575/ARTICLE)

### Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan 17/18

This Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan will deliver key outcomes that underpin the council's strategic objectives. This Delivery Plan does not cover "business as usual" or specific actions and targets identified in the Corporate Plan. Each outcome of the plan will be initially reported to the Portfolio Holder of Housing & Inclusion before reported to a range of stakeholders identified in the plan. The delivery plan will lead to further development in services and projects being delivered to support the community in the following years.

<b>Objective 1 - To understand our communities, the needs and concerns of local people, and respond to them</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Responsible Department/Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct community surveys and use the latest local data to produce the Community Profile and publish at least once every three years.</li> <li>- Use findings to shape service delivery, reporting suggestions to Chief Executive Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Profile disseminated and published.</li> <li>- Service delivery reflects needs of community.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Board	Chief Executive and Policy- Principal Policy and Economic Development Officer	July 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out detailed study on the current population, groups and facilities within the lower super output areas; identify issues and challenges.</li> <li>- Use findings to undertake targeted work to build community networks and engagement in each area to help support specific needs identified e.g. youth provision, isolated elderly and black and minority ethnic groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased understanding of the communities and their needs in the areas.</li> <li>- Increased community offer to groups and communities.</li> <li>- Improved community cohesion.</li> </ul>	Inclusion Partnership  Grants Panel	Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer	May 2017 (initial report) - <b>completed</b>  January 2018 (final report)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compile Annual Workforce Equality Profile.</li> <li>- Compare employee against local data (i.e. Census 2011, Community Survey etc.).</li> <li>- Publish to St Albans City &amp; District Council website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data supports the development of workforce that reflects the make-up of our community.</li> </ul>	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Corporate Services- Organisational Development Manager	March 2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and implement updated Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) across SADC.</li> <li>- Compare and collate EIA practice from near and statistical neighbours, consult internally.</li> <li>- Implement updated EIA procedures via Briefings at Departmental Team meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SADC EIA procedures updated and fit for purpose.</li> <li>- All priority projects have current EIA which identify impact on the community and further recommendations for inclusion</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Board	Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer	February 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene bi-annual Equality themed seminars with relevant internal and external partners and Community member representation and gather recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Findings influence grants funding and local commissioning and are fed into 2018/19 Inclusion Delivery Plan.</li> <li>- Increased understanding of Protected Characteristics, and improved ability to respond to needs, issues and concerns of local population and target resources appropriately.</li> </ul>	Inclusion Partnership/ Strategic Partnership	Community Services – Principal Community Engagement Officer/ Community Engagement Project Officer  Chief Executive and Policy- Policy, Partnership & Economic Manager	September 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publish diversity articles monthly on SADC Intranet according to religious and cultural calendars. E.g. Diwali, Black History Month. Invite staff to contribute and lead on areas of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased staff cultural /diversity awareness with focus on priority groups</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Board	Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer  Corporate Services- Corporate Services Support Officer	Starting January 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out staff survey around confidence and understanding of protected characteristics and relevance to delivery.</li> <li>- Include diversity questions on biennial staff survey.</li> <li>- Develop online and face to face training for staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff diversity training needs identified and fed into training plan.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Board	Corporate Services- Organisational Development Manager	June 2018

<b>Objective 2 - To involve local people in decision making to ensure an active democracy</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Responsible Department/Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
- Deliver Local Democracy Week with plan for improved engagement in priority areas.	- Residents from priority groups are more knowledgeable about how to get involved in local decision making.	Chief Executive Board	Elected Members Chief Executive and Policy--Democratic Services Manager	October 2017 - <b>complete</b>
- Proactively work with our county, town and parish council partners.  - Organise roundtable meetings and attend Parish conferences.	- Parish councillors are better informed of and involved in work of SADC.  - Residents in village parishes are more engaged.	Portfolio Holder for Business & Community Engagement  Chief Executive Board	Community Services – Principal Community Engagement Officer	2 meetings per year and annual Parish Conference
- Engage community in election participation.	- Increased election turnout against previous elections.	Portfolio Holder for Business & Community Engagement	Corporate Services Electoral Services Manager	June 2018
- Equip Council Members with awareness and knowledge of Inclusion and Diversity via online resources and face to face training.  - Implement 'before and after' training questionnaires and periodic surveys to measure impact and level of on-going community engagement.	- Council Members are knowledgeable of equality issues and have increased confidence engaging with priority groups.	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer  Chief Executive and Policy –Democratic Services Manager	External training June 2017- <b>completed</b> May 2018  Online resources March 2018



<b>Objective 3 - To encourage and empower all local people to become involved in community projects and play an active role in community life</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Responsible Department/Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure processes are established to support Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who receive SADC grant funding deliver initiatives to increase inclusion in the District.</li> <li>- Use community data in the decision making process when allocating Grant funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grant recipients reflect need in terms of protected characteristics and priority areas.</li> </ul>	Grants Panel	Community Services – Principal Community Engagement Officer/ Community Engagement Project Officer	June/July 2017 – <b>completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop community events programme that is inclusive and representative of our diverse community.</li> <li>- Develop system to measure participation in events according to priority groups and protected characteristics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community events participation is reflective of St Albans City and District population with improved participation from priority groups.</li> </ul>	Portfolio Holder for Business & Community Engagement/ Cabinet  Inclusion Partnership	Community Services - Community Engagement Officer	March 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with our Leisure contractors to ensure their delivery programme is reflective of inclusion priorities set out within this strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation in Sports and Arts programmes is reflective of local community.</li> </ul>	Portfolio Holder for Business & Community Engagement/ Portfolio Holder for Sports & Culture	Community Services – Principal Community Engagement Officer	Quarterly meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measure volunteering engagement against protected characteristics and priority groups and act upon findings to develop a more diverse volunteering workforce including the Museum Service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A more diverse volunteering workforce and increased take up of volunteering opportunities by priority groups/people who have not previously volunteered.</li> </ul>	Portfolio Holder for Business & Community Engagement/ Portfolio Holder for Sports & Culture	Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer  Commercial and Development Museums Volunteer Coordinator	February 2018

<p>- Deliver 'tackling loneliness in the District' motion from Council.</p>	<p>- Reduction in people reporting loneliness in district.  - Strengthened partnerships with VCS</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Business &amp; Community Engagement/ Cabinet</p>	<p>Chief Executive and Policy- Principal Policy and Economic Development Officer   Community Services – Principal Community Engagement Officer</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
---	--	--	--	------------------

<b>Objective 4 - To ensure access to information and feedback for local people and organisations</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Responsible Department/Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
- Further develop the offer within the Local Services Hub	- Hub facilities are offered to and taken up by grants recipients and other community partners. - Regular 6 monthly meetings with Customer Services team and VCS partners to review.	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Corporate Services- Customer Services Manager	January 2018
- Undertake a Website Equalities/ and Access Audit as part of SADC's Digital Transformation Project and use findings to improve the Council's website and develop our approach to social media such as Twitter so that information is easy to find and respond to. - Update website Equalities page to reflect Inclusion Strategy and Delivery Plan.	- All website visitors and social media users including those with access needs to website are able to find and respond to information easily.  - Visitors to website are aware of SADC approach to equality and inclusion.	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Corporate Services – Digital IT Manager  Community Services – Community Engagement Project Officer	March 2018  May 2018 (Socitm audit)
- Review and develop non digital material for members of the community with no internet access, literacy needs or learning disabilities as part of the Future Shape/Digital Transformation Project	- All customers are able to access information through a range of communication methods.	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Customer Champions  Corporate Services- Organisational Development Manager	March 2018
- Monitor complaints by location and where information is available measured against priority groups.	- SADC to identify areas for improvement.	Portfolio Holder for Resources	Corporate Services- Customer Relationships Officer	March 2018