**Gosport Borough Council’s Corporate Equality Objectives 2019-2021**

**Background**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), enacted in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 has a general duty that requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to tackle discrimination and promote equality for the protected characteristics of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and pregnancy and maternity, as well as encourage better relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties were created through secondary legislation and are intended to help public authorities perform the general duty more effectively. Specific duties require public authorities in England, Scotland and Wales to publish information demonstrating their compliance with the PSED and to set organisational equality objectives (England and Wales) at least every four years.

The following two objectives have been identified for 2019-21 and further the aims of the PSED:

**Objective 1: Maintain a diverse workforce whose staff feels valued and treated fairly and where equality and diversity are embedded within its service delivery and customer care.**

This objective sits within the Council’s strategic priority of “Deliver Effective Services” in its 2019 Corporate Plan by ensuring our workforce and is linked to our priority areas of:

* ensuring our services and initiatives are delivered efficiently
* take a customer focussed approach to how we work

**Evidence:**

The Council maintains its commitment to equality and diversity in both its employment practices and in its service delivery and customer care. A modern and diverse workforce who feels valued and treated fairly and is empowered to value and treat others fairly delivers on that commitment. A staff survey, as a follow up to the 2017 survey, will be carried out in 2019 to provide an opportunity for feedback on how people feel about working for the council and what the council could be doing better – or differently. Survey responses will feed into policy and practice development to support equality and diversity in staff and customer care.

**GBC Actions:**

* continue mandatory equality & diversity training for new staff and refresher training for all staff
* maintain equality impact assessments for all new policies and practices or when changes to existing ones are proposed to ensure fairness
* develop stronger links with voluntary and community groups supporting people with protected characteristics to help ensure Council premises and services are inclusive and accessible.
* work towards level two of the Disability Confident Award Scheme in 2019
* continue to develop as an armed forces friendly employer as a Silver Award Winner in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in 2019
* maintain the GBC Staff Armed Forces Forum to support staff with an armed forces connection and human resources policies and practices to support reservists.

**Objective 2: Improve public awareness of Domestic Abuse (DA) to help reduce the number of DA incidents and continue to work with partners to ensure local DA services are accessible and available to all who need them.**

This objective sits within the Council’s strategic priority of “Empower Our Residents” in its 2019 Corporate Plan and is linked to our priority area of addressing Vulnerability in our Community Safety Partnership Action plan for 2019.

**Evidence:**

In 2017/18 there were 987 offences. There is no comparable 2016/17 data but the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Partnership Force Strategic Assessment 2017/18 shows a 5% increase across the county.

**GBC Actions and or partnership initiatives:**

The Council communicates key messages about DA and promotes local DA services publicly with its partners in the Gosport Community Safety Partnership and across its own services. The Safer Community website is reviewed regularly and reflects any campaigns being undertaken nationally, by Hampshire Constabulary or led by the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum. High risk cases are referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process. Medium and low risk incidents are managed locally by the Neighbourhood Police Teams and are monitored through the Partnership Action Group process.

**Specific actions identified in CSP Strategic Plan for 2019:**

• supporting partnership referrals to MARAC by promoting the use of the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-based violence) risk identification checklist, include via a training session

• promoting and publicising the 16 days of action against Domestic Abuse to raise awareness of all types of it

• supporting partnership referrals to DA services by promoting the Domestic Abuse Front Door and the principle that for every victim there is a perpetrator**.**