



Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report

2021 – 2025

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Introduction

The Comhairle's refreshed Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2022 seeks to ensure that the Comhairle becomes increasingly agile and responsive in order to deliver our aspirations for our people and our place, as the Outer Hebrides adapts to a "new normal" post COVID-19, building on our current programme of Transformation and Change.

The priorities going forward remain geared towards effective financial and workforce planning, service redesign, Public Sector Reform and direction of travel towards Single Island Partnerships, Community Empowerment and Governance, the Islands Act, the Islands Growth Deal, Energy and Climate Change, and Capital and Infrastructure.

Our vision for this Corporate Strategy is that through partnership and reform we can strengthen the communities and economy of the Outer Hebrides by supporting a strong and socially inclusive recovery that creates empowered, resilient communities, based on a green economy in which digital connectivity and innovation are prioritised.

The Comhairle recognises that equality is key to achieving the Vision for the Outer Hebrides is by promoting equality within our practices and services and valuing the diversity of our employees and communities. The Comhairle is committed to tackling discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and promoting good relations within our workforce and our communities. Mainstreaming equality, diversity and human rights is the process by which we will work towards achieving this as an organisation for all residents, visitors and business of the Outer Hebrides.

By considering and integrating equalities into the daily work and discharging of duties required by the Comhairle will assist the achievement the vision set out above to the benefit of all those who live, work, visit and do business with the Outer Hebrides. We will take equalities into account in the way we go about our business when acting as:

- an Employer
- a Policy Maker
- a Service Provider
- a Decision Maker
- a Buyer of Goods and Services
- an Education Authority
- a Licensing Board

Furthermore, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) identifies a number of benefits to mainstreaming the equality duty which include:

- Equality becomes part of the structures, behaviour and culture of an authority
- An authority knows and can demonstrate how, in carrying out its functions, it is promoting equality
- Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement and better performance

The Comhairle is required to publish a mainstreaming report and set of equality outcomes by 30 April 2021. The Equality Outcomes are the results which we want to see happen over the next four years to make the Outer Hebrides a better place to live, work and do business.

The Equality Act 2010 and the General Duty

The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) came into force on 1 October 2010 and brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act introduced a new public sector general duty, this single duty replaced the three previous duties set out by race, disability and gender legislation. The purpose of the Act is to simplify, strengthen and harmonise legislation with a new discrimination law which protects all individuals, from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. The Act aims to ‘integrate considerations of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of all bodies subject to the duty’. All individuals are protected by the Act as every person has one or more of the protected characteristics listed below so the Act aims to protect everyone against unfair treatment. The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 came into force in 2011 which introduced a new a new Public Sector Equality Duty (“PSED”) which became law across Scotland. The PSED has three parts which required listed public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

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

The General Duty equips the Comhairle to:

- Take effective action on equality matters
- Make the right decisions first time
- Develop better policies, practices and procedures which are evidence based
- Be more transparent, accessible and accountable
- Improve outcomes for all

The Specific Duties of the Equality Act came into force on the 27 May 2012 with the majority of the reporting functions to be in place by 30 April 2013. The Specific Duties were introduced by the Scottish Government to assist public authorities like the Comhairle to meet the general duty. The specific duties are:

- Publish a set of equality outcomes and report on mainstreaming the Equality duty every four years (with the current mainstreaming covering the years 2021 to 2025 and requiring to be published no later than 30 April 2021)
- Report on progress made to achieve equality outcomes every 2 years (with the current report covering 2019 to 2021 and requiring to be published no later than 30 April 2021).

Listed public bodies are also required to:-

- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish statements on equal pay
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement

Mainstreaming Equalities in the Comhairle

The process of mainstreaming the equality duty requires the Comhairle to give due regard to equality and diversity in all the day to day activities which the authority is involved in. This means taking equality into account when conducting business as an employer, as a service provider and as a community partner. By integrating equality considerations into our day to day work we can improve the way in which we conduct business as an employer and when planning and delivering services. Everyone working for, or with, the Comhairle has a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and build positive relationships between different groups.

As a service provider and employer the Comhairle aims to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Comhairle as an Employer

As one of the largest employers in the Western Isles, it is recognised that Equality and Diversity is key to the work which the Comhairle is both responsible for and involved in.

The Comhairle has an Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy in place which sets out the statutory obligations placed on the Comhairle as a listed public authority, by the relevant legislation. The policy applies to Elected Members, employees, student placements and volunteers. The policy informs members of the public and relevant regulatory bodies about the Comhairle's commitment to equality of opportunity and set out its roles and responsibilities.

The Comhairle is a Disability Confident Employer whereby Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria of a vacant post are guaranteed an interview.

Post gradings, which are linked to salaries, are determined through the application of the Scottish Joint Council Job Evaluation Scheme which maintain the integrity of the Comhairle Local Government Employee grading structure.

Employee equality monitoring is undertaken on an annual basis. During 2020 the equality monitoring information of 2125 employees was reviewed. The majority of employee's (80%) describe themselves as 'White Scottish', which is consistent with the population of the Western Isles where 86.9% of people describe themselves as 'White Scottish' (Census, 2011).

The sex profile shows 78% of employees are female. In 2019 the largest number of employees fell within the 55 to 64 age category, this remains the case in 2020 with 646 employees falling within this category.

The disability profile shows 2% of employees disclosed having a disability.

Employees reporting their religion as The Church of Scotland accounts for 25% and Roman Catholic accounts for 8% of employees' religious beliefs. 10% of employees confirmed holding no religious beliefs.

In 2020 53% of employees declared that they were heterosexual. Approximately 1% of employees declared they were lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), this is against the Scottish average of 2% in 2018 (Office for National Statistics, Sexual orientation, UK: 2018).

It was reported that 43% of employees do not identify as transgender. The percentage of individuals identifying as transgender is less than 1%.

Elected Members

Councillors are elected by the public to serve and represent the individuals within the local area. Councillors have the opportunity to engage with the local community to identify the needs of constituents. They can provide leadership direction and support to compliance with the Equalities Strategy and provide a scrutiny role regarding the decision-making process.

Corporate Planning Team

The Corporate Planning Team consists of all the Heads of Service who have the responsibility for progressing equality within their individual service areas.

Equality and Diversity Service

The Organisational Development Section within Human Resources has responsibility for ensuring the co-ordination and mainstreaming of the equality's agenda.

Policy and Resources Committee

Policy and Resources Committee, chaired by the Leader, has the lead responsibility for Equalities. The Chair ensures, through the Chief Executive, that inclusion and diversity is central to the Comhairle's performance and service delivery agenda.

The Community Planning Partnership

The Community Planning Partnership is an information and consultation channel for all community partners to enable two-way communication with minority groups within the Western Isles. The Comhairle is a key stakeholder in the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) and leads on key priorities for the Western Isles. Community Planning is about public sector organisations working together to improve and deliver better public services for the authority area.

The Education Authority

The Comhairle's Education Authority is committed to the principle that the experience of being included, valued and respected is the right of every child and young person and their parents.

The Education Authority is also committed to creating children's services and educational opportunities that are fair and equitable regardless of disability, race, gender, social background, religion and belief/culture, age, sexual orientation or additional support needs. This is most likely to be achieved when diversity is recognised, valued, respected and regarded positively, and where planning takes place with equality and diversity in mind.

The Education Authority recognises the existence of other discriminatory factors such as ability, poverty, remoteness and mental health and seeks to ensure that these do not militate against the achievement of equal outcomes. The Education Authority strives to ensure that wherever possible education provision should be in a mainstream school, while recognising that appropriate support, advice and resources may be necessary to achieve this. However, it also acknowledges that parents and young people are entitled to express a preference for where that education should take place. In furthering this goal the Comhairle's Education Authority will:

- ensure that pursuit of the experience of inclusion for ALL underpins all local developments
- encourage and develop shared local responsibility and commitment to educating and providing for all the children and young people in their local area
- work with schools to develop inclusive cultures, policies and practices
- monitor progress towards enhanced inclusive practice

The Education Authority is committed to enhancing the capacity of its educational establishments and services to address all forms of discrimination and remove barriers to participation and achievement. For all children and young people it will continue to seek to secure this by enabling choice and ensuring access to a full range of appropriate curriculum and learning opportunities within the local community. The digital learning service, e-Sgoil, provides a wider and more equitable choice of subjects for pupils across all secondary schools in the Isles, including the delivery of Nat5 and Higher Gaelic classes.

The Education Authority recognises that 'additional support needs' refers to any child or young person who, for whatever reason, requires additional support for learning. It also recognises that additional support needs can arise from any factor which inhibits a child or young person's capacity to benefit from learning or education, whether these factors relate to the learning environment or to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, ability, health or family and care dimensions. The way in which these factors impact on the child's learning and participation informs the level and type of support necessary. The authority has in place a continuum of assessment and a system of staged intervention based on these principles and works with partners to ensure early identification, effective intervention and well managed transitions in respect of those children and young people who may require support.

Our commitment to inclusivity and diversity includes a recognition of the importance of Gaelic language and culture in the lives of the people of the Western Isles. As the council area in Scotland with the most speakers of Gaelic, the Comhairle, through the implementation of its Gaelic Language Plan and Gaelic Policy, is committed to mainstreaming the promotion, learning and use of the language in its day-to-day activities and in its educational provision. This includes the implementation of the Comhairle's Gaelic First policy for

Nursery to P2 enrolments from 2020/21 onwards, which entails that Gaelic medium education (GME) is deemed the default choice for parents enrolling their children. This has led to a substantial rise in GME enrolments across the 19 out of 21 primary schools in the Isles where GME is available. Three Principal Teachers (2fte) of GME have also been appointed in Isles secondary schools to enhance curricular provision, and to foster a stronger Gaelic ethos in those schools.

The Licensing Board

The regimes under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gaming Act 2005 set out broad aims which the Board must and will support in all its functions, which are:

- The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005
 - Preventing crime and disorder
 - Securing public safety
 - Preventing public nuisance
 - Protecting and improving public health
 - Protecting children from harm

- The Gambling Act 2005
 - Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
 - Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
 - Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

Constitution

The Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The Board is entrusted with the administration of liquor licensing and with certain other statutory duties. The Board is comprised of 10 elected members of the Comhairle, elected at the first Comhairle Meeting after each ordinary Council election. A Licensing Board must consist of at least 5 members. Board meetings are held in public but deliberations can be made in private. All decisions taken by the Board must be made in public. Following the Local Government Elections in May 2017 a new Licensing Board was elected.

All revenue received by the Board from licence application fees must be transferred to the Comhairle. The Comhairle is charged with the responsibility for providing accommodation for meetings of the Board and all necessary expenses in respect of the proceedings of the Board. Meetings are held in venues that are fully accessible.

Work of the Board

- Accept and process to grant, vary, transfer, review or refuse all applications for liquor licensing premises.
- Accept and process to grant, vary, review or refuse all applications for personal licences.
- Accept and process to grant, vary or refuse all applications for occasional extensions and occasional licences.
- Accept and process to grant, vary, transfer, review or refuse all applications for gaming premises licences.

- Accept and process to grant, vary, transfer, review or refuse all applications for automatic entitlement to gaming machines and gaming machine permits for licensed premises and registered clubs.
- Accept and process to grant, vary, review or refuse registrations for the promotion of Small Societies' Lotteries.
- Hear certain complaints against licence holders for example, if they are breaking the licence conditions.
- Consult on and adopt policies in relation to the Board's licensing functions.
- Provide general support and guidance to the trade and the community on the above.

The Board has to formulate a number of policies to ensure consistency and fairness in the operation of its licensing functions. The Board also has a Scheme of Delegation to allow the Clerk to grant some routine requests without the need for formal hearings.

Licensing Forum

The Licensing Forum ('the Forum') is the medium through which the Board can engage with representatives of all parts of the community and ensure community views are taken into account in the development of Board policies and guidelines.

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 lays down statutory groups that must be represented within the Forum, these being:

- Holders of premises licences and personal licences
- The Chief Constable for the area
- Persons having functions related to health, education and social work
- Young persons
- Person's resident within the Forums area
- Licensing Standards Officer

Premises Licences, Staff and Training

There are currently 100 premises licences issued by the Board, which includes 6 clubs. Licensed premises, excluding clubs, must have a premises manager. 53 premises managers are male and 47 are female. The work of the Board is carried out by the Clerk to the Board and the Licensing Standards Officer. Members and staff will attend, seminars and briefing on Equalities run by the Comhairle.

Equality Policy

The Board has adopted the Comhairle's Equality Policy to enable it to assist us in mainstreaming equalities into the licensing process. It will act as a tool giving us due regard to our equalities duties, both in setting licensing policy and procedures and, in determining licensing applications. We have now included the following mission statement in our Equality Policy:

'Our mission is to serve the licensing needs of the Western Isles as quickly and efficiently as possible, striking a balance between the business needs of our customers and the interests of the community as a whole, in order to protect the public and further the licensing objectives set out under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005.'

To achieve our mission:

- We will reach out to all parts of our society and genuinely reflect their interests in determining policy.
- We will have open and honest exchanges of information in customer-friendly settings and make decisions in a fair and reasoned manner based around agreed and published policies.
- We will promote fairness in all we do, thereby ensuring that equality considerations are central to the administration of the licensing system.
- We will work in partnership with a wide range of other public bodies, including the Comhairle and its various services, statutory consultees, licence holders and the public to achieve our objective. They too should work towards eliminating any unlawful discrimination and protect equality of opportunity and good relations between persons from all sections of society.
- We will strive to reflect the interests of people from all sections of the society we serve.

Translation and Interpretation Services

We will use interpreters at Licensing Hearings where it is known that the applicant for a licence does not have English as a first language. We will also provide policy documents and procedures in alternative formats on request.

Equality Impact Assessments

To ensure consistency across the Western Isles we have adopted the EQIA toolkit developed by Comhairle.

The Outer Hebrides

Population

The most recent mid-year population estimates by National Records of Scotland 2019 for the Outer Hebrides gives a population of 26,720. Over the last ten years, between 2009 and 2019, the Outer Hebrides has seen a decrease of 700 persons (-2.6%) while Scotland overall saw an increase of 4.4%.

Year of Births Registration	Annual Births
2010	235
2011	235
2012	237
2013	246
2014	226
2015	222
2016	238
2017	215
2018	206
2019	200

The birth rates as reported by National Records of Scotland across the Western Isles is shown in the table 1.

Using 2018 as a base and taking into account key assumptions (mortality, fertility and migration); National Records of Scotland predict that the total population of the Outer Hebrides is projected to fall to 22,709 by 2043. This is a projected decline of 16% or 4,021 people between 2018 and 2043. The equivalent figure for Scotland over the same time period is an increase of 2.5%.

Table 1

There may be opportunities for population attraction as a result of the pandemic, and if adequately supported by transport and digital connectivity, with the islands being perceived as a low risk, clean, attractive relocation opportunity for businesses and individuals.

Age

Demographically, the population of the Outer Hebrides is ageing. As at June 2019 the median age in the islands was estimated to be 49.5 years compared to the Scottish average of 42 yrs. According to the National Records of Scotland as at 2019 approximately one in four people (26%) living in the Outer Hebrides are aged 65 and over, in comparison to the Scottish average of 19%. The population continues to age with 16% of the population aged under 16 (17% nationally) and 59% of the population of working age (64% nationally) while 25% are pensionable age (19% nationally).

Table 2 summarises the data according to the 2011 Census.

AGE	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people	27684	5295403
% 0 to 4 years old	4.9	5.5
% 5 to 15 years old	12.0	11.8
% 16 to 29 years old	13.3	18.5
% 30 to 44 years old	18.3	20.0
% 45 to 59 years old	22.1	21.1
% 60 to 74 years old	19.4	15.5
% 75 years old and over	10.0	7.7
Median age - Females	47	42
Median age - Males	44	40

Table 2

Sex

Table 3 below summarised the data according to the 2011 Census in relation to the sex breakdown across Scotland and the Western Isles.

Sex	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people	27684	5295403
% Males	49.4	48.5
% Females	50.6	51.5

Table 3

Language

According to Scotland's Census 2011, National Records of Scotland in 2011, most (93%) people in Scotland aged 3 and over reported that they used only English at home. Scots and Polish (each 1%) and Gaelic (0.5%) were the most common languages other than English reported as being used at home.

There were 59,000 Gaelic speakers, a slight fall from 59,000 in 2001. The council areas with the highest proportions able to speak Gaelic were Eilean Siar (52%), Highland (5%) and Argyll & Bute (4%). Gaelic was most commonly used at home in Eilean Siar (40%), Highland (2%) and Argyll & Bute (1%).

British Sign Language was used at home by 13,000 people aged 3 and over (0.2% of the total population aged 3 and over). It was reported that the Western Isles had a total of 36 BSL users in 2011.

Personal Well-Being

The Office of National Statistics Personal well-being reporting in the UK for April 2019 to March 2020 estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety at the UK, country, regional, county and local authority level. Average ratings are out of 10 and are summarised in Table 4.

March 2012 to March 2020	Outer Hebrides	National average
Life Satisfaction	8.3	7.7
Worthwhile	8.3	7.9
Happiness	8.0	7.5
Anxiety	2.2	3.2

Table 4

Gender Reassignment

The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) published a report that was funded by the Home Office which estimated that between 0.6% and 1.0% of the population were trans. As of 2011, 12,500 adults in the UK had sought medical interventions related to their gender dysphoria, the median age is 42.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Census 2011 statistics of marriage and civil partnerships as shown below in table 5.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people aged 16 and over	23006	4379072
% Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	31.9	35.4
% Married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership	49.0	45.4
% Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)	2.7	3.2
% Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	6.5	8.2
% Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	9.9	7.8
All people aged 16 and over	23006	4379072
% Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	31.9	35.4

Table 5

Sexual Orientation

The Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder reports that in 2018 95.3% of people in Scotland identified as heterosexual and 2.6% as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB).

Ethnicity

In 2011, 84% of Scotland's population reported their ethnicity as 'White: Scottish' and a further 8% as 'White: Other British'. Together, minority ethnic groups and white non-British groups (which include 'White: Irish', 'White: Polish', 'White: Gypsy/ Traveller' and 'White: Other white') made up 8% of the total population. The percentage of people in Scotland from minority ethnic groups had doubled to 4%, up from 2% in 2001. A breakdown of the data from the 2011 Census can be found within table 6.

Ethnicity	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people	27684	5295403
% White - Scottish	86.9	84.0
% White - Other British	10.5	7.9
% White - Irish	0.5	1.0
% White - Polish	0.2	1.2
% White - Other	1.0	2.0
% Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0.5	2.7
% Other ethnic groups	0.4	1.3

Table 6

Religion

Table 7 below summarises the religious breakdown of the Western Isles and Scotland according to the 2011 Census.

Religion	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people	27684	5295403
% Church of Scotland	42.5	32.4
% Roman Catholic	12.3	15.9
% Other Christian	19.1	5.5
% Muslim	0.2	1.4
% Other religions	0.6	1.1
% No religion	18.1	36.7
% Not stated	7.1	7.0

Table 7

Disability

Table 8 below summarised the data according to the 2011 Census relating to people with long-term health problem or disability across the Western Isles and Scotland.

Disability	Eilean Siar	Scotland
All people	27684	5295403
% Limited a lot	9.8	9.6
% Limited a little	10.8	10.1
% Not limited	79.5	80.4

Table 8

Finance

Prior to Brexit and Covid-19, the Comhairle was operating in a prolonged period of economic austerity and public sector funding constraints. Since Covid, Scottish Government has financially supported local authorities with business support, food supply and job retention through furlough. Unless further funds are received from central government, the pressure on the Comhairle's budgets and reserves will be challenging. It is likely that there may be additional pressures should there be a reduction in external funding resulting from Brexit and post-Covid-19 realignment of government funding. It is therefore vital that the Comhairle's

Service Redesign Programme is extended to all areas of the Comhairle to deliver required savings. Comhairle service redesign will continue to take place in a partnership context, which explores potential new forms for shared and collaborative delivery of services both locally and nationally.

Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

The development of the National Islands Plan's Implementation Routemap will set the framework for how Scottish Government, along with island communities, will deliver the aims and aspirations of island communities within the National Islands Plan. In conjunction with the development of Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIAs), it is critical that the Comhairle and its partners ensure that these processes deliver the best possible outcomes for the Outer Hebrides.

Equality Outcomes 2021 to 2025

Equality Outcomes are described as a 'results' which are intended to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people's life chances by:

- eliminating discrimination,
- advancing equality of opportunity
- fostering good relations

The specific duty requires the Comhairle, the Education Authority and the Licensing Board to publish a set of equality outcomes which will operate within the each of listed bodies existing corporate systems and framework for business planning and public performance reporting. The purpose of these outcomes are to improve the life chance of those who experience discrimination and disadvantage.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland) identifies that preparing and publishing equality outcomes will help the Comhairle to:

- Increase transparency by establishing a clear link between the evidence and the action taken to advance opportunity
- Ensure the right issues are being addressed
- Make better, fairer decisions, which are communicated and understood by those affected by them
- Become more accountable to those who the Comhairle deliver services to or employ
- Demonstrate that the Comhairle will bring tangible benefits for communities and employees

Whilst it is recognised that this is a challenging period for the public sector, particularly in managing community expectations with fewer resources, these circumstances can also provide opportunities for exploring new ways of delivering services and make things more equitable for different groups of people

In developing the equality outcomes set out in this report consideration has been given to the advice and guidance documents published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland), information and evidence available at a local and national level across the functions of the Comhairle. The following information and evidence has also been considered:

- Existing evidence and data available through the reporting of the 2017 to 2021 equality outcomes

- Data on the profile of equalities and protected groups (Census; Scottish Index of Deprivation; Health and Wellbeing profiles)
- Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership strategies and plans
- Corporate Comhairle strategies and plans
- HR policies
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Employee monitoring information
- Gender Pay Gap information

We have engaged with Senior Managers across Comhairle services and undertaken a public consultation exercise. Individuals were invited to comment on the Comhairles proposed equality outcomes for the period 2021 to 2025 by completing an online survey. In total 148 individuals accessed the survey. Overall 77% of respondents agreed with the proposed outcomes and a total of 310 comments were made. Equality data showed that 69% of respondents were female and 50% were aged between 45 and 64.

Five Equality Outcomes have been developed. A number of the actions and outcomes from 2017-2021 continue to be relevant and progressed on an ongoing basis, these have been refreshed and continued through to the 2021-2025 outcomes.

The protected characteristic which each outcome is intended to benefit and which aspect of the general duty it will help the Comhairle meet is set out in the outcomes. Proposed actions that will be taken to achieve these outcomes are also detailed. The Equality Outcomes are intended to be strategic and provide a degree of flexibility in achieving them as local and national priorities, legislation and budgets continue to change.

THEME	Work and Accessibility
OUTCOME	Make the Western Isles an accessible place to live and work
Protected Characteristics	Age, Sex, Disability, Pregnancy and Maternity
Public Sector Equality Duty	Eliminate Discrimination and Advance Opportunity

No.	What we want to achieve	Evidence
1.1	Comhairle buildings and services are accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints • Number and ways service users access services
1.2	Local transport is accessible, affordable and reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bus passengers recorded on all Western Isles routes • Number of accessible taxis
1.3	Childcare is accessible for those who need it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Local Authority Nursery hours available for Early Learning and Childcare • Number of publicly funded pre-school places • Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good/better
1.4	Support and develop new and existing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new business enquiries dealt with • Number of jobs created/safeguarded • Number of existing businesses supported to achieve growth • Number of young people supported in business • Number of new business start-ups • Number of Business Enterprise Skills Workshops delivered • No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population

THEME Living Standards
OUTCOME Support independent living and initiatives which encourage people to continue living within the Western Isles
Protected Characteristics Age, Sex, Disability and Pregnancy and Maternity
Public Sector Equality Duty Eliminate Discrimination, Advance Opportunity and Foster Good Relations

No.	What we want to achieve	Evidence
2.1	Maximise availability of funding for Adaptations provision, Care and Repair and related services which assist independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNES & HHP Budgets • Number of interventions provided by CNES & HHP • Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018-2023 • Annual number of new housing units and tenure options specifically targeted at young people
2.2	An adequate range of temporary accommodation for homeless households in terms of size, location and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness: Number of applications received • The temporary accommodation profile reviewed in Annual Homelessness Report
2.3	Support independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of population receiving care at home, breakdown of age, gender, disability • Number of hours of care provided • Number Young carers with plans • Uptake of support and benefits • Percentage of households in fuel poverty in the Outer Hebrides

THEME Equal Opportunity Employer
OUTCOME Be recognised as an equal opportunity employer with an employee profile reflective of the authority area
Protected Characteristics All protected characteristics
Public Sector Equality Duty Eliminate Discrimination, Advance Opportunity and Foster Good Relations

No.	What we want to achieve	Evidence
3.1	Employees feel valued and are treated with equity and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Survey results • The gender pay gap (%) • Corporate Occupational Segregation Report • Percentage of the highest paid 5% employees who are women
3.2	Have an employee profile reflective of the authority area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census and local data compared with employee profile across protected characteristics • Encourage employees to share their equal opportunity information - disclosure levels on MyView

THEME	Education
OUTCOME	Equal Opportunity to high quality learning and teaching in all education settings to develop skills for lifelong learning and working
Protected Characteristics	Age, Sex, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Religion or belief and Sexual Orientation
Public Sector Equality Duty	Eliminate Discrimination and Advance Opportunity

No.	What we want to achieve	Evidence
4.1	Equality of access to academic and vocational education choice throughout the authority area improving the life chances of our young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)
4.2	Young people have the confidence and skills to move on to employment, volunteering, further education or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of pupils entering positive destinations • Percentage of apprentices achieving target qualifications. • Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5 • Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6
4.3	Positive school leaver destinations for all young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of adults participating in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision achieving one or more of their learning outcomes per annum
4.4	Support the Gaelic language and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic medium education enrolment levels • Numbers attending Ulpan classes
4.5	Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy • % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy • Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils • Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils • Percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 • Percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas

THEME	Communication, engagement and participation
OUTCOME	Increase the opportunity to participate in public life and the democratic process
Protected Characteristics	All protected characteristics
Public Sector Equality Duty	Eliminate Discrimination, Advance Opportunity and Foster Good Relations

No.	What we want to achieve	Evidence
5.1	Gain a better understanding of the challenges facing individual to access services in changing times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital inclusion
5.2	Explore opportunities for involving individuals with protected characteristics in the shaping of our public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of OHCPP community engagement events held.
5.3	Better understand the communication needs of service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of customers satisfied with quality of Customer Services (Town Hall, Stornoway) • Requests for information in other formats (BLS, Gaelic..)

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