

Report of the Chief Executive

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20201. Purpose of report

To provide members with an annual review of activity and outcomes in respect of the Council's equality and diversity work.

2. Background

The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy provides the framework for the Council's approach to the wide-ranging equality and diversity agenda. While incorporating the Council's legal responsibilities as a public body within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, it also outlines the Council's aims and aspirations for achieving cohesive and inclusive communities and ensuring equal access to services. The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019/20 is provided at appendix 1 to this report. This is produced slightly later than would usually be the case. An update to provide the 20/21 data will however be produced as soon as possible after the close of the current financial year.

Under the Equality Act, public bodies are required to publish equality objectives that will help them further the aims of the general duty. Equality objectives must be specific and measurable and are intended to help focus attention on the priority equality issues within an organisation and help deliver improvements in policy making, service delivery and employment.

Appendix 2 of the report sets out the Council's refreshed Equality objectives for 2021/23. Appendix 3 sets out progress against the objectives set for 19/20 and there follows an action plan in appendix 4 for 2021-23 based on the proposed amended objectives for 21/23.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report including information contained in appendix 1; the progress in implementing the action plan for 2019/21 set out in appendix 3 and RESOLVE that the proposed Equalities Objectives and action plan for 2021-23 contained in appendices 2 and 4 be approved.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

This report highlights the work undertaken and the progress and achievements made by the Council and its partners in the area of equality and diversity during 2019/20.

1. POLICY CONTEXT

In Broxtowe we want a society in which everyone can contribute to and benefit from our shared ambitions and priorities. This aim is summed up in our policy statement:

‘Broxtowe Borough Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities, valuing diversity and tackling social exclusion. The Council will aim to provide opportunities that meet the diverse needs of different people and groups of people by ensuring that services and employment opportunities are accessible to all. Everyone will be treated fairly and with respect. Diverse needs will be understood and valued. The Council will aim to eradicate all forms of discrimination.’

The Council recognises that it has a duty to mainstream equality and diversity in all it does. We also understand that we have a duty to exercise leadership to promote fundamental rights such as equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination and we accept that we are in a unique position as an employer, service provider and community leader to promote equality and prevent discrimination.

The experience of the coronavirus (the full extent of which will be particularly apparent for the 20/21 annual report which will be prepared after the year-end) has laid bare the enormity of the social and health inequalities which mean that the experience of minority ethnic communities and more deprived parts of the UK have suffered worse health outcomes – higher death rates and higher rates of infection, than other groups. The reasons are complex and multi-faceted, including the prevalence of pre-existing health conditions, the occupations of many BAME and individuals from poorer areas, overcrowding and vulnerability to redundancy from working in jobs which have little job security. Broxtowe’s residents will have suffered the impact of this no less than in other parts of the country. This experience underlines the importance of the work to address inequalities.

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

Broxtowe Borough Council has a strong infrastructure to ensure our commitment to equality and diversity is put into practice. Our policy framework outlines the key elements which contribute to the Council’s approach to the equality and diversity agenda.

2.1 The Equality Framework for Local Government

The Council was recognised at the ‘Achieving’ level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The accreditation acknowledged our strong corporate and organisational commitment to equality and diversity and our collaborative work with partners in tackling discrimination and disadvantage and in improving the quality of life of our residents.

2.2 Equalities Working Group

The Equalities Working Group is chaired by the Chief Executive and is attended by senior managers and front line staff from all of the Council's departments and key service areas. Meetings of the group are also attended by trade union representatives. The group drives the equality and diversity work across the Council and is responsible for ensuring actions and targets are mainstreamed both corporately and across service areas. During 2019/20 the group has:

- monitored progress against the Council's published equality objectives.
- Overseen progress against equality impact assessments undertaken during the year.
- Reviewed the take up of interactive training for equality and diversity through the Broxtowe Learning Zone, including training on the Equality Act 2010, visual impairment, autism awareness, deaf awareness, dementia awareness, preventing extremism and learning disability and suicide prevention e-learning framework
- Overseen the creation of the mental health first champions group
- Given advice and guidance on initiatives on hate crime, refugees, dementia, on the workforce profile, child poverty action plan and accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- Received reports from the Disability Forum
- Discussed how the Council can make progress to achieve the "Excellence" status of the EFLG and "Leader" status for employment of people with disabilities.

2.3 Equalities Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a way of determining that a policy, function or service is delivered fairly to all sections of the community and that it promotes equality wherever possible. If a negative impact on a particular equality group is identified when undertaking an EIA, steps should be taken immediately to remove it if it cannot be justified.

During the course of 2019/20 the following EIAs were completed:

Housing acquisitions policy
Fixed term tenancies policy
Income management policies
Pets Policy
Neighbourhood strategy
Allocations policy
Empty homes strategy
HMO policy
Management of communal areas policy
Mobility scooter policy
Gas and electrical policies
Rent payment methods
Budget 2020/21

The Council will continue to assess the impact of new policies, functions or services or revisions to them to ensure compliance with its legal obligations and to demonstrate

that it has considered the impact of its decisions on people who share a protected characteristic.

The Council monitors information regarding its employees, and its recruitment policies, and the annual workforce profile was produced for 2019/20 which is available on the Council's intranet and was reported to Personnel Committee on 23rd March.

Highlights relevant to this report include:

- A rise of 43.06% in 2018/19 and a further increase of 15.53% in 2019/20 in applications received from BAME applicants for Council jobs has resulted in an overall increase of 65.28% between 2017 and 2020.
- There were 55 BAME applicants shortlisted in 2019/20. The percentage of BAME applicants shortlisted for Council advertised jobs has steadily increased over the past 3 years by 57.14% overall.
- The Council received 61 applications from people with disabilities in 2019/20 This is an overall increase of 41.86% since 2017/18.
- During 2019/20, 7.80% of the workforce was from a BAME background, based on the 456 employees who submitted a response. This was an increase of 1.36% since 2018/19. The workforce BAME, based on those that submitted a response, is slightly less than the borough's BAME background which was 7.82% in the 2011 census.
- The average service length for those who have disabilities has increased on the previous year and the overall average length is approximately 37.28% longer for those employees, compared with those who do not have a disability.
- Broxtowe employed 244 females and 239 males as at 31 March 2020.
- At the median the gender pay gap for Broxtowe is 0. At the mean (the average) it is 4.9% for all employees. For full time workers it is -2.2% and for part time workers it is -7.27%.

2.4 Training

The training section of the Human Resources division has a comprehensive equality and diversity learning programme which is fully endorsed by the corporate Equalities Working Group. As part of the corporate induction course, all new employees receive a copy of the 'Equality and Diversity at Work' handbook which is designed to reinforce the messages contained within the presentation.

By March 2020, a total of 61 e-learning courses were available to employees and Members, with 3 new courses being launched during 2019/20 and with 10 updated courses. The new courses launched included Coronavirus Awareness, Dealing with Threats of Self-Harm and Suicide and Domestic Abuse Awareness.

During the course of 2019/20, the following numbers of employees completed online learning courses relating to equality issues (people who have left the organisation after Feb 2020 are excluded from the figures).

Course	Feb 2020	
	Complete	In progress
Equality Act 2010 – live since 2014 Updated February 20	453	1
Equality Act 2010 for ICT Services Updated June 20	5	1
Learning Disability Awareness includes dyslexia – live since Oct 2016	15	1
Autism Awareness – live since Oct 2016	45	4
Deaf Awareness – live since Feb 2017	18	1
Dementia Awareness – updated June 2019	43	1
Hate Crime – live since Oct 2017 Updated July 20	401	7
Visual Impairment – live since March 2018	17	0
Mental Health Awareness – live since May 2017 Updated June 20	35	4

Learning Zone is accessible from a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone, enabling users to access the site either at work, as part of their agreed learning programme, or in their own time for personal development

A range of other e-learning programmes have been developed and are made available to employees.

Knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity issues has been designed in to the Council's Core Abilities Framework, which is the competency framework against which employees are assessed and against which annual personal development plans are developed.

2.5 Community Engagement

Broxtowe's Communications Strategy provides a framework for consulting with local people and stakeholders in the planning and delivery of services. We have a number of established means of communication including Community Action Teams (CATs), consultation with our tenants and leaseholders through Open Forums, Service Review Groups and Resident Involvement Groups and the Broxtowe Disability Forum. Other opportunities for engagement occur for example through the work of the planning section in the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, local stakeholder discussions through the Broxtowe partnership, community safety action planning, work with Parish and Town Councils and so on.

In addition to these long-established and continuing consultation and engagement mechanisms, the Council undertook a number of additional bespoke consultation and/or

engagement exercises during 2019/20 in order to gauge opinion, seek expert advice or to facilitate successful community projects.

Examples of these included consultation included the Budget consultation for 2019/20. Another example was the creation of a new Neighbourhood engagement strategy for housing. This set out new commitments for going out to engage with local residents in their localities, better feedback in the form of more “you said we did” feedback, “meet the manager” meetings in location, a tenant inspector scheme and recruitment of community champions.

The Disability Forum in 2019/20 considered the following issues

- Disability gardens
- Access to parks and open spaces for people with disabilities
- Mental health action plan
- The disability confident employer scheme
- Customer service support for disabled people
- Car parking for people with disabilities (in particular signage)
- The first responder system
- Accessibility of Beeston station for people with disabilities
- The work of independent living co-ordinators
- The Stapleford food project
- The Pegasus programme
- The blue badge issuing process
- A journey assistance card
- The Eastwood mental health hub

2.6 Complaints

The Council registered a total of 449 stage 1 complaints in the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, compared to 344 in the year 2018/19. The number of complaints concluded under stage 2 of the complaints procedure was 41, compared to 30 in 2018/19, and 5 complaints, compared to 4 in 2018/19 were determined by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service. Although from these figures it does not appear that people from BAME groups or disability are disproportionately adversely impacted by poor service delivery, it perhaps highlights a need to ensure that the complaints procedure is promoted more widely.

Equalities Monitoring

Of the 449 stage 1 complaints recorded, 173 were completed with the monitoring data

Gender

Male – 52
Female – 77
Not stated - 44

Age groups

<17 - 1	45–59 – 32
18–24 – 3	60–64 – 3
25–29 – 9	65+ – 17
30–44 – 35	Not stated – 73

Ethnic Groups

British – 96
Indian – 3
Caribbean -1
Not stated – 68
Any other White – 5

Long term health problem that limits daily activity?

Yes – 14
No – 80
Not stated - 79

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2019/20

This section of the report is intended to highlight some key achievements and developments in 2019/20 both in meeting the needs of vulnerable people and in responding to the aspirations of our diverse communities. Outcomes are highlighted across our corporate priorities.

3.1 Housing

Our work on making Broxtowe a place where people can live well with dementia progressed, with plans advanced to develop another two new dementia friendly bungalows in Beeston. These were completed in 2020/21. This is an action within our dementia action plan. During 2019/20 we also trained 92 people to be dementia friends.

Adaptations to properties for people with disabilities were made in accordance with the policy. Expenditure of £743,658 was incurred in 2019/20.

The housing section ran a summer holiday outward bound day aimed at young people and families who would not otherwise be able to enjoy a holiday during the summer.

The housing section built on the excellent work done in the previous year through a learning disability “learning journey” which led to the creation of an “easy read” tenancy agreement, by creating a community living network using some of our existing council homes, for people with learning disabilities, working with colleagues at the County Council.

37 Syrian refugees from the Syrian vulnerable people’s refugee programme were housed in Broxtowe in both private and public housing. Supportive networks were put in place to ensure they felt welcomed, supported to learn English, gain work experience and achieve social integration.

The agreement to put in place an expanded range of payment options for rent and council tax using local shops made it easier for people with mobility problems to access easy routes to make payment, and a new financial inclusion policy was approved to reflect our commitments to people on lower incomes who are struggling with their finances.

The roll out of Universal credit continued slowly. However, thanks to the investment the council made in the previous year in additional staffing for rent collection and more resource for financial inclusion and tenancy sustainability, rent arrears were kept at a manageable level.

3.2 Business Growth

Under this priority the Council seeks to encourage business growth, the regeneration of town centres and in particular the implementation of Beeston town centre phase 2.

During 2019/20 a total of 8 work experience placements were offered of which 5 attended. Placements were offered to pupils from the borough's schools and colleges, a student from Nottingham University, as well as placements from our partnership with Beeston Job Centre offering Disability Confident adults a four-week placement.

Work commenced on Stapleford Towns Fund. One of the main focuses of this work will be to tackle problems relating to lower skill levels through creating new opportunities to reach out to young people, connect them to training and development, and make this more locally accessible for people who need this support.

The Eastwood action plan continued to focus action within this area which is an area where there are higher levels of deprivation, poorer health outcomes and lower skill levels and income inequality and child poverty.

Included within the Eastwood Action plan (another area of higher unemployment, lower educational attainment, higher poverty and poorer health outcomes), were initiatives which related to the running of a Job club in Eastwood, partnership with the CAB relating to additional debt advice in Eastwood; information events aimed families in partnership with the children's centre; substance misuse initiatives aimed at Young people in Eastwood in partnership with Change Grow Live and Eastwood young people's centre; smoking cessation activity and work to set up an Eastwood mental health hub in partnership with the CAB and MIND.

3.3 The Environment

The Council is committed to protecting the environment and enhancing it for future generations and seeks to achieve this aim through innovative approaches to waste management and recycling, energy reduction, and the management and enhancement of our parks and open spaces. It is standard procedure in relation to all capital projects to enhance parks and open spaces to pay attention to the needs of disabled children and accessibility for disabled people to our parks and open spaces.

We recognise that the environment belongs to everyone and we endeavour to work with our community to achieve our objectives. Tree and shrub planting schemes take place with the engagement of local residents and community groups, particularly children and young people.

Our waste and recycling service provides an assisted collections service for domestic refuse. People with disabilities, the elderly and the infirm, who may experience difficulty in placing their refuse bins at their property boundary ready for collection, receive a service which enables the bin to be pulled out for them. The service can also be offered on a temporary basis to people recovering from illness or injury or following surgery and which restricts their ability to place their bins at the appropriate collection point. In addition there are several of our housing complexes where all bins are pulled out without having to go through the application process.

3.4 Health

L Leisure, the Council's leisure company, continued to provide opportunities to participate in activities regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin or physical ability. These included free swimming sessions for children during the school summer holidays, and targeted activities such as walking football sessions to encourage less active people to take physical exercise.

The Health partnership task group continues to deliver a programme of activities to address health inequalities in Broxtowe. This has included delivery of actions to encourage breastfeeding; reduce drug and alcohol misuse, reduce obesity and improve mental wellbeing, stopping smoking and promoting healthy eating options for takeaway outlets. This all helped to tackle some of the underlying reasons for health inequalities.

The Council has developed and delivered a child poverty action plan, and a funding to deliver a food poverty project was gained in Stapleford during 19/20.

Throughout the year, we worked with partners to deliver and support a number of successful community and multi-cultural events across the borough including black history week and the season of lights event.

The Council developed a new air quality action plan which is helping to improve air quality, which tends to be worse in poorer areas, reflecting busier roads and more polluted areas.

The council adopted a new menopause policy, to support employees.

3.5 Community Safety

Crime disproportionately affects more deprived wards in Broxtowe. The Police and Crime Commissioner funded work which provided additional measures to tackle crime in Eastwood South during 2019/20. A new knife crime action plan was created. Again knife crime tends to affect people and places where there are higher levels of crime and deprivation.

The council increased its resources to tackle domestic violence by employing an additional officer to focus and co-ordinate work in this area and pursue an action plan accredited under the "White Ribbon" scheme.

A campaign was launched to address the issue of Hate Crime, which received particular attention during hate crime awareness week. This sort of crime disproportionately affects people from BAME groups and people with disabilities and other protected characteristics.

The local community came together in January 2020 to mark the 20th annual Holocaust Memorial Day, which the Council is proud to have marked for a number of years. Those attending the ceremony at the Walled Garden at Bramcote Hills Park included civic dignitaries, members, officers, and community leaders, members of the public and young people from across the Borough.

The Refugee Steering group met regularly to oversee arrangements to support the welfare of those settling in our area under the Vulnerable People's resettlement programme.

APPENDIX 2

BROXTOWE'S EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Through these five broad headings and the targeted work identified under each one we propose to address our main priorities for improving our understanding of the inequalities in the borough, addressing identified needs and fostering good relations between our diverse communities.

Develop our knowledge and understanding of the communities we serve

- Review the impact of Coronavirus on our community to see how any pre-existing inequalities may have led to higher harmful outcomes relating to people's health, wellbeing and employment status
- Keep the borough profile under review and do "deep dives" of ward and community profiles to spot changes which might need changes to patterns of service delivery.
- Improve the quality of data about the issues affecting disadvantaged and minority groups including those protected under the Equality Act.

Identify and deliver actions which aim to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

- Work with partner agencies to identify health inequalities within disadvantaged groups and sections of the community and deliver targeted work through the Leisure and Health Committee the Health and Older People's Task Group of the Broxtowe Partnership and within the Integrated Care system and Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing board.
- Work with partners on the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership to deliver targeted work to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and improve outcomes for vulnerable people.
- Deliver the pledges we have undertaken to tackle and alleviate child poverty in Broxtowe as part of our Child Poverty Strategy and under the hate crime pledge.
- Continue to deliver actions to address the needs of minority and vulnerable groups including work on supporting people to live well with dementia, work to tackle loneliness and to support those with mental health problems and learning disabilities.

Improve service design and delivery through improved communication and engagement with our communities

- promote the use of customer engagement and feedback to inform the way services are designed and delivered.
- improve and strengthen existing community engagement mechanisms through Community Action Teams, service review groups, the tenant engagement strategy, the disability forum and local community groups and

ensure consultation and engagement outcomes are fed back into the policy making arena.

- Learn from case study “customer journey” studies in order to progress understanding of the experience of customers with protected characteristics of the council’s services.

Embed equalities throughout the Council

- Develop our workforce planning and profile data to improve the quality of protected characteristic information and support for employees with protected characteristics.
- Make progress to achieve the ‘Excellent’ accreditation of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- Continue to deliver equality awareness training as part of the corporate induction process for employees and members and equality and diversity training to all employees and members on relevant subjects.
- Improve the quality and quantity of information on the Council’s website and improved monitoring of targeted outcomes.
- Improve the diversity and inclusiveness of our governance structures.

Foster good relations between our communities

- Continue to support and promote events and activities that bring people together, celebrating the diversity of the borough and contributing to community cohesion.
- Improve the way in which refugees and asylum seekers are supported within the community with the assistance of voluntary effort within the community.