

Report of the Chief Executive

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2017/181. 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 2017/8 is provided at appendix 1 to this report.

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 Equality objectives for 2018/19 and there follows an action plan for 2018-20 based on these objectives.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report including information contained in appendix 1 and RESOLVE that the proposed Equalities Objectives and action plan for 2018-20 contained in appendix 2 be approved.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

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 2017/18.

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.

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 is currently accredited at the ‘Achieving’ level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The accreditation acknowledges 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 2017/18 the group has:

- monitored progress against the Council’s published equality objectives.

- overseen progress against equality impact assessments undertaken during the year.
- Worked with the training section on the roll-out of interactive training for equality and diversity through the Broxtowe Learning Zone, including a new programme visual impairment to add to those already developed on autism awareness, deaf awareness, dementia awareness, preventing extremism and learning disability.
- Face to face training opportunity was afforded to employees in partnership with the Police on Trans equality; in partnership with the Holocaust centre on Hate crime and in partnership with the Gay and Lesbian switchboard on LGBT equality.
- Given advice and guidance to initiatives on hate crime, refugees, dementia
- Received reports from the Disability Forum
- Discussed national reports and the implications of recommendations such as those of the Casey review

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 2017/18 the following EIAs were completed:

- (a) Green Infrastructure Strategy. Consultation had taken place and the action plan had taken into account the consultation responses received.
- (b) Energy Procurement Strategy. The Strategy highlighted the potential that exists in the future to take into account social value when awarding contracts, which had been encouraged by recent legislation with a view to extracting more value from contracts by, for example, construction companies offering apprentice placements as part of the delivery of a contract and thus helping the Council to achieve its aspirations. Officers were requested to remind staff of the need to consider social value when preparing tender specifications.
- (c) Asset Management Strategy had highlighted the fact that accessibility to operational buildings had 'fallen off the radar' and discussion ensued on the reasons for this.
- (d) Capital Strategy. Beeston Square access/new toilets to be acceptable, energy efficient and environmentally friendly. There was the need for assets of community value to be recognised in the context of equality.
- (e) Business Strategy. When the cash offices had closed a separate impact assessment had been undertaken which was now to be refreshed.
- (f) Tenancy Sustainment Strategy and Procedure. Difficulties in communicating with deaf tenants were noted. There was an e-learning course available to address this.
- (g) The budget 2017/18: comments from the disability forum were considered

- (h) Charges and collection frequencies for waste from commercial and household premises: no adverse impacts
- (i) Aids and Adaptations Policy: new grants for adaptations to properties for people diagnosed with dementia were introduced and grants to enable people to adapt their homes to facilitate hospital discharge as well as to move to more appropriate housing suitable for their needs.
- (j) Consent Streets Order: no adverse impacts.
- (k) Enforcement Policy: this takes into account the needs of vulnerable people and those with protected characteristics when decisions on enforcement are made
- (l) Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy and Money Laundering Prevention Policy: no adverse impacts
- (m) Customers with additional support needs: this policy is designed to protect and support people including those with Protected characteristics to support their wellbeing and signpost them to support services
- (n) Void management policy: no adverse impacts
- (o) Play strategy: there was a wide ranging consultation underpinning the strategy covering different genders, ages and those with disabilities. Issues highlighted included the need for suitable seating in play areas for adults and carers; swings designed to accommodate a companion; rubber surfacing to be wheelchair friendly and the need to avoid access obstacles
- (p) Land disposals policy: no adverse impacts

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 2016/17 which is available on the Council's website.

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. During the course of 2017/18,

72 employees completed training on the Equalities Act (585 have completed training overall); All PC users were assigned this training to complete within 2 months of the start of their employment.

17 employees completed training on Autism awareness (41 overall)

18 employees completed training on deaf awareness

4 employees completed training on Learning Disabilities (23 overall)

23 employees received training on dementia awareness, through the Broxtowe Learning zone

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.

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 2017/18 in order to gauge opinion, seek expert advice or to facilitate successful community projects.

Examples of these included consultation involved in developing the Play Strategy; consultations regarding Local Plan part 2 land allocations ; Budget consultation for 2018/19, and consultation regarding the future of Beeston Town Hall.

The Disability Forum considered issues such as:

- Air quality: the Environmental Health officer responsible for developing the action plan to address this explained how the actions would assist people with breathing difficulties or heart problems
- Support for visually impaired people in Broxtowe Borough Council
- Access to leisure services : the interim managing director of Liberty Leisure Ltd attended and as a result of the discussion greater flexibility was afforded to gym membership holders who had to suspend their accounts on account of illness
- Discussion as to how Hemlock Happening could be made more accessible
- Concerns about the impact of potholes on wheelchair users: these were passed on to the Highway authority

- The dementia action plan: the members of the group commented on the draft dementia action plan
- Becoming a “disability confident employer” by enabling work experience to be offered to people to support them entering the workforce
- The support being offered to residents and customers with mental health problems through the employment through a partnership with Gedling and Rushcliffe , of a mental health social worker.

2.6 Complaints

Of the 269 stage 1 complaints recorded in 2016/17, 99 (37%) were received by the paper and internet complaint forms which request monitoring information. Of the 99 that were received, 53 (54%) were completed with the equalities monitoring data.

Gender

Male – 26
 Female – 22
 Not stated - 5

Ethnic Groups

White British – 41
 Irish – 1
 Other White - 1
 Other Asian – 1
 Not stated – 5

Age groups

<17 - 0	45–59 – 18
18–24 – 3	60–64 – 0
25–29 – 5	65+ – 9
30–44 – 11	Not stated – 5

Long term health problem that limits daily activity?

Yes – 12
 No – 37
 Not stated – 3

The data did not raise any particular concerns in respect of any equality strand.

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2017/18

This section of the report is intended to highlight some key achievements and developments in 2017/18 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

The Housing Committee decided to undertake a review of its Retirement Living service. A report is expected shortly which will assess the adequacy of supply of Housing for people needing supported housing against the demand that there is for this housing in all areas of the Borough. In addition the fitness of the accommodation for the needs of ageing tenants will be assessed. The model of support offered through the officer structure for tenants living in this accommodation will be reviewed against best practice elsewhere, as will the operation of the lifeline service. This is a significant piece of work which will have far reaching implications which will benefit older people living in Broxtowe

The Council is working with health partners to develop a hospital discharge scheme which will enable support to be provided for people leaving hospital but who need assistance before being able to return to live independently at home. Practical help with technology, including easy to access messaging systems for people in the early stages of dementia and the lifeline system operated by the Council enable many older residents to stay in their own home for longer.

Adaptations to properties for people with disabilities were made in accordance with the policy. To date expenditure of £455,331 has been incurred.

A new policy for people with additional care and support needs was agreed by housing Committee. This provides a clear framework within which Housing Officers are expected to conduct risk assessments and link people with such support needs up with a variety of agencies which can support their needs.

A new rent collection policy was agreed which sets out the support available for vulnerable people who face financial problems.

A Universal credit steering group was set up which includes the CAB, the housing section, Housing benefits section and DWP. This will ensure that there is good planning to support people when Universal credit is introduced later in 18/19.

Following a Housing restructure in October 2017 a new tenancy Sustainment Officer and a new Financial Inclusion Officer were employed. These employees are helping people to sustain their tenancies and helping them manage their resources.

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.

By the end of March 2017 Broxtowe had provided a total of **19** work experience placements to students, young job seekers and the long-term unemployed. **6** apprenticeship positions were in place at Broxtowe and many more are provided through the partnership with our Housing Modernisation contractor.

Included within the Eastwood Action plan (another area of higher unemployment), are initiatives which relate to helping young people in Eastwood access employment opportunities, which include working with a company, "Talent Match" to support young people's employability skills. In addition the Job club in Eastwood is proving very successful in helping people with interview practice, writing CVs and in job applications. Some have successfully entered the workforce through the support offered.

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.

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. Disabled people, 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. At the end of February 2018, some 982 householders were utilising this service. In addition there are several complexes where all bins are pulled out without having to go through the application process.

3.4 Health

Liberty 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, targeted activities such as Walking Football and Walking Netball for older participants, the 'Walk and Talk' initiative, which included specific opportunities for people with a range of disabilities, and

'Buggy Babes' providing an opportunity for mums with babies to get together and socialise while exercising.

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 address smoking cessation; reduce drug and alcohol misuse, reduce obesity and improve mental wellbeing.

The Council has developed and delivered a dementia action plan and a child poverty action plan. A multi-agency stakeholder group is meeting to help map services for people diagnosed with dementia in order to help these people link up with support services.

Through the Health task group a learning disabilities network was set up which is helping people with learning disabilities to access services and enabling them to enjoy social opportunities. A case study focusing on Housing has provided valuable insights as to how the housing service can respond better to the housing needs of people with learning disabilities.

The Borough Council has assisted the County Council led initiative to reduce loneliness through a pilot scheme which has operated in Beeston.

Throughout the year, we worked with partners to deliver and support a number of successful community and multi-cultural events across the borough, including the Hemlock Happening and Christmas Lights switch on events.

Free swimming in the school holidays and Free play days run by liberty Leisure in Eastwood Kimberley, Stapleford and Beeston in July and August continue to enable youngsters from low income families to benefit from activity during the school holidays.

During the year, the Broxtowe Community Celebration Group within the Broxtowe Partnership works to celebrate the diversity of our local community and to build positive partnerships between different faith and cultural groups.

The 13th annual Community Celebration event was held in July 2017 at its usual venue, Round Hill School, Beeston, where 844 people enjoyed food, music and performances which were representative of faiths and cultures from around the world. 90% agreed that the event was successful in bringing people from different backgrounds together.

The calendar year concluded in December 2017 with the cross-cultural 'Season of Lights' celebration .450 visitors attended including people with a diverse number of backgrounds and beliefs including such as Turkish, Pakistani, Chinese, Muslim, Korean, Afro-Caribbean, Sikh, Russian, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Pagan, Atheist, Buddhist and a number of Eastern European Communities . The event received very positive feedback.

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 2017/18.

The local community came together in January 2018 to mark the 18th 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

- Develop a consolidated database of borough profile data and undertake an annual review of the statistical profile of Broxtowe and the disaggregated ward and community profiles.
- 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 Health Task Group of the Broxtowe Partnership.
- 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.
- 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, disability forum and local community groups and ensure consultation and engagement outcomes are fed back into the policy making arena.

Embed equalities throughout the Council

- Develop our workforce planning and profile data to improve the quality of protected characteristic information.
- Undertake a self-assessment against the criteria of 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.
- Continue to provide equality and diversity training to all employees and members.
- Improve the quality and quantity of information on the Council's website and improved monitoring of targeted outcomes.
- 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.

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.