



Corporate Overview Group

Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme update and Diversity Annual Report 2022

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Summary

- 1.1. Following the adoption of the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme in May 2021 it was decided that a report would be brought back to the Corporate Overview Group on work carried out on delivery of the action plan in place to support that Scheme after the initial 12 months. This report provides that update but also it was felt it would be beneficial to combine the update with the annual diversity report update which is presented to Corporate Overview Group. This report therefore provides both updates.
- 1.2. The information in the report compares the demographic information for the Borough, using the latest census information, with that of the Council's workforce, with this information being taken from the HR /Payroll system. Unfortunately, information from the 2021 census is not yet available so the comparison is with data from the 2011 census.
- 1.3. The report also provides the update on the delivery of the EDI Scheme action plan that has been in place since its agreement in May 2021. This will be supported by a presentation to be delivered to the Group providing further details on some of the activity that has taken place and is planned.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Overview Group:

- a) consider and endorse the report information provided for the diversity annual report
- b) review the action taken so far as a part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme action plan and make suggestions for future action or areas of focus.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider and think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. Although there is no explicit legal duty for public sector bodies to collect and use equality data, authorities must understand the impact of their policies and practices on people with protected characteristics. Therefore, collecting, analysing and monitoring information is an important way to develop this understanding.

- 3.2. In addition, as this is a new approach to the Council's EDI Scheme which is high level with a supporting action plan it is important that members have the opportunity to scrutinise this new approach and the work carried out to date.

4. Supporting Evidence

- 4.1 A breakdown of the ethnicity of the Borough in comparison with the East Midlands and nationally is shown at Appendix A1. As new census data has not yet been published, this is the same information as presented to scrutiny last year.
- 4.2 Workforce information, at Appendix B, shows that the Council currently, broadly, reflects the demographics of the Borough with 94% of RBC employees in the white British or white other ethnic group which is the same as for the residents of the Borough (white 93%). The figure for the Borough is higher than that for the East Midlands (89%) and nationally (85%).

Age Profile

- 4.3 The age profile of Rushcliffe indicates that the Borough has a larger proportion of residents who are over 60 years of age (25%) than the East Midlands (23.5%) and national average (22%). There is also a larger proportion of residents between the ages of 45 and 59 within Rushcliffe (21%) than nationally (19%) Appendix A2.
- 4.4 Conversely, there are fewer younger residents between 18 and 24 (7.8%) than the East Midlands (9.53%) and nationally (9.37%). In addition, there is a disparity in the 25 to 29 age groups between Rushcliffe (4.7%), East Midlands (6.1%) and nationally (6.8%).
- 4.5 The age profile of the organisation shows that there is a peak at 45 to 54, this is the same as was reported in 2019/20. 20% of the workforce is aged between 18 and 34, and 59% are aged between 35 and 54. The authority continues to support employees who wish to continue working, keeping knowledge within the organisation as well as working towards ensuring effective succession planning by improving the age diversity of the workforce.

Disability

- 4.6 Data from the 2011 Census shows that 7,540 people (6.7% of the population) in Rushcliffe have a long-term health problem or disability which limits their daily activities to a greater extent. A further 9,939 (8.9%) are limited to a lesser extent. These are lower than the percentages for the East Midlands which are 8.6% (greater extent), and 11.9% (a lesser extent). Appendix A3.
- 4.7 The number of employees who declare they have a disability is the same as the previous year at 5%. As an authority, the Council continues to support employees who are either disabled when they join the authority or become disabled during their employment. This is through the Council's policies, and occupational and welfare services. Appendix B.
- 4.8 The Council is a Disability Confident Employer and has reached the required criteria to be reaccredited this year.

Gender

- 4.9 The gender profile for the Borough area shows there are slightly more females (51%) than males (49%) currently residing in the Borough (Appendix A3). The gender split at the Council shows fewer female employees than males (42% compared to 58%) which is, in some part, due to the Council's manual workforce containing roles that are traditionally male dominated. The Council has worked to encourage female employees into this environment and will continue to promote fair recruitment practices and positive action to encourage a diverse workforce.
- 4.10 Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The figures for the 2010/21 year are shown at Appendix C. Within the last financial year, employee changes have resulted in a positive impact on the results most noticeably a reduction from the original difference of 8.9% between the mean £per hour of male and female pay to now a difference of less than 1%.

Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.11 The organisation is aware of the need to consider the impact of decisions it makes on the citizens it represents and also the workforce it employs. To this end, Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on key policies and strategies. This process will be reviewed as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme and officers offered refresher training to ensure they focus on approaching EIAs from the inclusion perspective and looking at the process as helping to ensure improved quality outcomes, rather than the narrower, but important, purpose of equality. As an example, these include more direct reference to former armed forces personnel.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

- 4.12 The EDI Scheme which was adopted in May 2021 has four high level aims:
- We want Rushcliffe to be a welcoming place for everyone
 - We want our services to be easy to access for all
 - We will treat people fairly and aim to meet individual needs
 - We aim to make Rushcliffe a place where everyone can achieve their potential.
- 4.13 To support the delivery of these aims, the Council identified a number of commitments:
- Understanding our community
 - Reflecting the diversity of our community
 - Working in partnership to achieve impact
 - Supporting our workforce.
- 4.14 The actions within the action plan (Appendix E) are separated into actions against these commitments. This will enable the measurement of the level of

activity in each area and identify where officers may need to shift focus to ensure the Council is delivering on all of its commitments.

- 4.15 What follows is an update on work completed so far and some detail on plans for the coming months. It is important to note that this is ongoing work and so the following should be read as a snapshot in time that will be constantly updated. This is the purpose of having the higher-level scheme with supporting action plan to help ensure that this is a living document that is owned across all areas of the Council. There is always more work to be done and officers would welcome the ideas of the Group to feed into future plans.
- 4.16 It was identified that, to ensure that EDI is embedded across the Council, actions from the plan should be included in annual service plans. This happened for some of the more significant and new actions in the plan. The intention of service plans is that these highlight new areas of work or bigger projects rather than more operational/day to day tasks. Due to the importance of this work, it has been recommended that EDI is included as a strategic task in the 2022/23 service plans.
- 4.17 The Borough Council's website is now fully accessible and all new documents that are added meet the accessibility standards. A review is taking place of other documents on the website to ensure they are updated to meet the new accessibility standards. This is a significant task and so will therefore take some time to complete. The agreement to have a new Council website by Spring 2023 will provide an opportunity for staff in service areas to review their web pages and associated documents so this could help to accelerate this process.
- 4.18 A key action within the plan is also to support Councillors to lead on EDI through the provision of relevant training. There is essential e-learning training on EDI that all councillors must complete within 12 months of being elected, currently this has not been completed by all councillors. In addition, the guide to being a councillor is currently being refreshed and this will include enhanced information on EDI.
- 4.19 The plan identifies the need to engage more young people in democracy and to support this an event was held at Rushcliffe Arena for 30 year 10 students from Toothill School. The Electoral Services and Communications teams welcomed the pupils to learn more about national and local elections, the need to register to vote when they turn 16 and why it's important to have their say as part of a democracy. It saw four candidates from the group stand for the 'election' in the imaginary Toot Hill ward of the town and battle for votes among their classmates, electioneering on pledges of local improvements, council tax changes and key changes to plans for environmental and planning projects. This will be rolled out to other schools based on staffing capacity and interest from schools.
- 4.20 With support of East Midlands Councils the option of providing BSL training for customer services staff is being explored. In addition, the events team is looking at the option to have subtitles/sign language at future events e.g. outdoor cinema.

4.21 One of the headline projects included in the plan is the re-establishment of the Rushcliffe Community Cohesion Network (RCCN). RCCN was established previously as part of the Local Strategic Partnership which operated from 2008 to around 2012. This group was responsible for driving forward the community cohesion agenda in Rushcliffe. This network would help the Council to better understand and meet the needs of its diverse community. The group would have the opportunity to influence the work of the Council, its emerging policies and strategies and provide support to engage everyone.

4.22 Rushcliffe Community Voluntary Service (RCVS) and Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire have been commissioned to re-establish the network including identification of groups and individuals to be involved, a terms of reference, plan for the coming year and a chair. Whilst terms of reference are to be agreed it is anticipated the objectives of the group would include:

- Develop understanding of community cohesion issues in Rushcliffe and promote awareness of these
- Ensure community cohesion issues and activities are embedded into Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Provide comment on emerging policies and strategies of the Council where requested to ensure they are inclusive.

4.23 Covid-19 has had an impact on everyone's lives but it is widely acknowledged that it has had a disproportionate impact on some members of the community. It is important that the Council identifies and provides the right support to those who have been affected. The Council needs to ensure those that need it continue to be able to access the support they need and it is anticipated that the RCCN will support with this too. There were questions included in the residents' survey (August 2021) about Covid-19 and also others which are relevant such as still feeling engaged/connected with your community:

- How well did you and do you continue to feel informed and connected with the latest information on Covid-19 in your local area? – 64%
- Percentage of people who feel they belong to the local area – 79% (down from 82% in 2018)
- Percentage of people who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area – 57% (up from 52% in 2018)
- Percentage of people who agree that local people pull together to improve their local area – 67% (up from 61% in 2018)
- Percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area 26% (down from 31% in 2018).

It is hoped the RCCN will help in these areas and also provide greater insight to the barriers people feel in these areas. The above results will provide a benchmark for RCCN to monitor work going forward.

4.24 One immediate requirement to address the impacts of Covid-19 is the right employment and skills support for residents. The Borough Council work closely with partners on this as much of the support is offered across a wider area e.g. Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. It is therefore about identifying the support available and signposting people to the right support for them. The

type of support offered by the Council and partners over the last year includes:

- YouNG and Positive Futures which has now been operating for a number of years with funding from the Council
- Careers Enterprise Company which is intended to link schools with employers so young people have a better understanding of the local labour market and the skills they need to access it
- The Borough Council had two supported interns in early 2020 in the Business Support Unit and Communications Team
- We currently have one Kickstart placement within the Borough Council and this is a programme we promoted widely to local businesses.

4.25 The Borough Council's Economic Growth Team is also planning a Recruiting Talent event alongside Building Better Opportunities programme to take place in June 2022. This is designed to encourage employers to be inclusive in their recruitment practices and will show them the support that is available to them in doing this. The event will include some presentations but also some roundtable discussions on themes of unlocking hidden talent of:

- People with disabilities
- Young people
- Parents and carers.

4.26 Plans are being put together for a mentors' scheme which would see willing officers of the Council acting as mentors for local young people. The intention is that this will be trialled from September 2022 with the YouNG Ambassadors who are appointed for 2022/23 academic year, this will therefore be seven young people matched with seven Council officers. If it proves to be successful, this will be rolled out for more people to be involved including businesses in the Borough. This will provide support for young people but also development opportunities for Council staff who will be offered support and training to help them with this role.

4.27 Covid-19 has also had an impact on the way that people access Council services as it forced many to access services online which they had previously done in person. Web and email enquiries doubled in 2021 compared to the volume pre-pandemic in 2019. A review of Customer Service Centres and customer contact points will be undertaken in line with a new Customer Services Strategy to identify the best ways to meet customer's needs. The ways that residents contact us is monitored on a monthly basis so that the impact of the pandemic can be seen.

4.28 The Active Rushcliffe Health Partnership helps organisations and services work together to deliver projects supporting high priority groups, such as disability, BAME, women and girls (including pregnancy and maternity).

4.29 The Council has an established Employee Liaison Group (ELG). This is a group of staff who act as representatives for their service area to provide insight into new policies and plans impacting on employees of the Council. This ensures that any decisions taken consider the views of employees and that employees have an opportunity to raise any issues or ideas with senior

management. In July 2021 new representatives were voted onto ELG, it is intended that as well as the usual roles for this group they will act as EDI champions and additional training will be provided to support them with that. This is planned to take place later in 2022.

- 4.30 The Council has also worked hard to review recruitment policy and practices to ensure that the process is as inclusive as possible and attract a diverse range of applicants. This includes updating information on the recruitment pages of the website, creating a short presentation showcasing the benefits associated with working for the Council, and accepting CV's instead of applicants having to complete a long application form.
- 4.31 The Council advertise job opportunities on websites aimed at attracting veterans - Careers Transition Partnership (veterans have a guaranteed job interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria) and have also just registered with Forces Family Jobs.
- 4.32 The Council have also have utilised government initiative; Kickstart to help 16-24yr old unemployed. The Council continues to encourage women and men with young families or caring responsibilities by offering flexibility and family friendly policies. Appendix B.
- 4.33 Over the last year, 281 applicants have applied for jobs at the Council. The data on this can be found at Appendix D which includes a breakdown of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion and disabilities for applications in 2021/22 and 2020/21.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to collect and use equality data means the Council runs the risk of not understanding the impact of its policies and practices on people with protected characteristics.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

The costs of the support detailed in the main body of the report are covered by existing budgets. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.2. Legal Implications

This report supports the Council's compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

6.3. Equalities Implications

This report contains information regarding the Council's monitoring of Equality objectives under the Public Sector Duty, as well as complying with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

Section 17 requires local authorities to consider the community safety implications of all their activities. The Council's Equality Scheme shows a commitment to monitor the demographic information of the Borough, encouraging knowledge of the people we serve of Councillors and employees and encouraging cohesiveness.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	<p>The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider and think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. This report sets out relevant information about the Borough, Council staff and the work done over the last year.</p> <p>By ensuring we monitor this information and acting accordingly we are encouraging an improved knowledge of the people we serve, of Councillors and employees, and encouraging cohesiveness.</p>
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Corporate Overview Group

- a) consider and endorse the report information provided for the diversity annual report
- b) review the action taken so far as a part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme action plan and make suggestions for future action or areas of focus.

For more information contact:	<p>Jo Wilkinson Strategic Human Resources Manager 0115 914 8241 jwilkinson@rushcliffe.gov.uk</p>
Background papers Available for Inspection:	<p><i>Rushcliffe Borough Councils Equality Scheme 2021 to 2025</i></p>
List of appendices (if any):	<p>Appendix A Demographic Information Appendix B Rushcliffe Borough Council Workforce Equality Information. Appendix C Gender Pay gap information Appendix D Information about job applicants Appendix E EDI Action Plan</p>

