



Corporate Overview Group

Wednesday, 14 June 2023

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme update and
Diversity Annual Report 2023**

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Summary

- 1.1. This is an annual report presented to the Corporate Overview Group which provides both the diversity annual report as well as an update on delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion scheme action plan in the last 12 months.
- 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 and Councillors.
- 1.3. The EDI Scheme action plan 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 The information included in the appendices related to Council staff shows a significant increase in employees compared to 2021/22 (313 in 2022/23 and 260 in 2021/22) this is due to insourcing of Streetwise Grounds Maintenance service.
- 4.2 A breakdown of the ethnicity of the Borough in comparison with the East Midlands and nationally is shown at Appendix A1. This is based on census information from 2021.
- 4.3 Workforce information, at Appendix B, shows that the Council currently, broadly, reflects the demographics of the Borough with 84% of RBC employees in the white British or white other ethnic group which is slightly lower than figures for residents of the Borough (white 89%). The figure for the Borough is higher than that for the East Midlands (88%) and nationally (79%).

Age Profile

- 4.4 The age profile of Rushcliffe can be found at appendix A2 and it indicates that the Borough has a larger proportion of residents who are over 60 years of age (28%) than the East Midlands (25.5%) and national average (24%).
- 4.5 There are fewer residents aged between 15 and 24 in Rushcliffe (10%) than the East Midlands (12%) and England (11.7%). The age ranges reported from the census in 2011 vary from those for 2021 so it is difficult to make a direct comparison. However at the report to Corporate Overview Group in 2022 (which included data from 2011 census) the difference between Rushcliffe, East Midlands and England remained the same with more over 60's and less between 15 and 24.
- 4.6 The age profile of the organisation (appendix B) shows that there is a peak at 45 to 54, this is the same as in previous years as can be seen in the table. 19% of the workforce is aged between 18 and 34, and 54% 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

- 4.7 Data from the 2021 Census shows that 7,145 people (6% of the population) in Rushcliffe have a long-term health problem or disability which limits their daily activities a lot. A further 11,929 (10%) are limited a little. These are lower than the percentages for the East Midlands which are 12.9% (alot), and 18% (a little). Appendix A3.
- 4.8 The number of employees who declare they have a disability is the same as the previous year at 5% although it is a slightly larger number of employees at 17 compared to 13 in 2021/22. 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.

- 4.9 The Council is a Disability Confident Employer and has reached the required criteria to be reaccredited this year.

Gender and Sex

- 4.10 The data set for identity of sex for the Borough area shows there are slightly more males than females currently residing in the Borough (Appendix A4). The split at the Council shows fewer female employees than males (38% compared to 62%) 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.
- 4.11 For the 2021 census the Government also included a question about gender identity. This is included at appendix A4, this data is not currently collected for Council employees.
- 4.12 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 up to end of March 2022 are shown at Appendix E (data for the previous year, up to March 2023, will not be available until July).
- 4.13 The figures are taken as a snapshot of employees in post on 31 March. Within the last financial year employee changes have resulted in a positive impact on the results most noticeably a reduction from the original difference in 2017 of 8.9% between the mean £per hour of male and female pay to now the female mean being higher than the male mean. The significant change here is that for the first time in 6 years the female mean hourly rate is higher than the male equivalent.

Applicants

- 4.14 As well as monitoring information for the Council's current employees information is also recorded on the individuals who apply for jobs at the Council. This enables the Council to see if applications are being received from a diverse range of applicants.
- 4.15 This information is included at appendix D and it shows that in 2022/23 there were around 100 more applicants for jobs at the Council than in the previous year. This is largely due to a larger number of jobs being advertised (62 compared to 42).
- 4.16 The data shows that, of those that choose to declare, the majority of applicants to the Council are white British or other white (60%). Most are heterosexual (82%). There are slightly more male applicants (52%) than female and the majority (91.9%) are not disabled. Finally the majority are aged between 25 and 34 (25.6%) slightly above the 35 – 44 age range

(24.8%). This is lower than the employee age range where the majority are in the 45 to 54 age range.

Councillors

- 4.17 As requested at Corporate Overview Group in 2022 information about Councillors is now included at appendix C.
- 4.18 This shows that the majority of Councillors are male (66%) and this has remained the same since the recent election. 7% of councillors have reported that they have a disability, again this is the same as in the previous year. The majority of Councillors are aged 65+ (37%) and again this is consistent with the previous year.
- 4.19 Ethnicity information is not currently recorded for Councillors and therefore this information is not available for sharing.

Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 All officers need to understand when an EIA is required and what needs to be considered; prior to rolling out training, officers are taking the opportunity to review the existing process. This work is being undertaken by East Midlands Councils (EMC) who are working with Officers who are already familiar with the current process. Once this review is complete EMC will develop a proposal with suggested changes and a new process and training will be shared. The final agreed process will be implemented and will ensure a consistent approach to EIA's.
- 4.22 As reported to Cabinet in February, the Council have launched a grant pot using some of the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funding (UKSPF and REPF). Applicants have all been required to complete an EIA form to ensure they are considering the impact of their project on everyone.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

- 4.23 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.
- 4.24 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.

- 4.25 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. The action plan update can be found at appendix F.
- 4.26 It was identified that, to ensure that EDI is embedded across the Council, actions from the plan should be included in annual service plans. The delivery of the EDI action plan is now a strategic task within the Development and Growth Service Plan for 2023/24, other individual actions from the plan are also included in other service plans. In addition, an internal officers group has been established with representation from different service areas in the Council to support delivery of the action plan. This group meets quarterly and is supported by an officer from East Midlands Councils to provide expertise and best practice from elsewhere.
- 4.27 The Borough Council's new website was launched in April 2023. This meets the accessibility standard and officers have reviewed all web pages and associated documents to work towards ensuring all meet the accessibility standards.
- 4.28 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. In addition, an inclusive language guide has been produced to support staff and councillors, recognising that the words we use have the power to support inclusion. Inclusive language is about respecting individuals, their unique identities and their preferences.
- 4.29 Last year 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 is the intention of Officers to offer to host a similar event later in the year and, if possible, include more/different local schools dependent upon interest from schools and staffing capacity.
- 4.30 There was a motion to Council in December 2021 to establish a Rushcliffe Youth Council. Officers undertook some research to find out if anything was already established and also learn from what other local authorities were doing. This work identified that there is already a Rushcliffe Youth Forum. It has been agreed by Cabinet in March 2023 (following scrutiny in January 2023) for Officers and Councillors as appropriate to engage with this group. One of Rushcliffe's Service Managers will attend each meeting to update the group on the work of the Council and get their input and involvement. It has also been agreed that we will support the group to identify some new members as there are currently only a few young people involved.

- 4.31 As the plan shows one of the projects was to engage with local organisations and groups to explore the opportunity to re-establish 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 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.
- 4.32 Rushcliffe Community Voluntary Service (RCVS) and Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire were 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. Both organisations and the Council promoted the opportunity through various networks and in communities. The first meeting was arranged and held in September 2022 when the group discussed the remit of the group. A second meeting was arranged for March 2023 which focussed on grant funding being provided by the Council (UKSPF and REPF) and gave the group the opportunity to share their views on priorities.
- 4.33 Despite considerable efforts to promote the Network, meetings have attracted only a very limited number of attendees. Officers are working with RCVS and RCAN to consider options for the future of the group. In the meantime the network is being used virtually (with correspondence by email) to ensure continued engagement and support where required.
- 4.34 Gresham is now home to the East Midlands Pan Disability (EMPD) league which is held on the third Sunday of each month. The EMPD was established in 2016 to give footballers with additional needs the opportunity to play competitive football in a safe, fun and friendly environment. To support this and other user groups funding has been secured for the installation of a changing places toilet at Gresham. This work will be completed in 2023/24.
- 4.35 Rushcliffe Country Park has also recently benefitted from investment by the Council with improvements to the visitor centre and café area. As a part of this, a Changing Places toilet was installed to make the park more inclusive for all.
- 4.36 As reflected in the action plan, we need to engage with local businesses and people to continue to support them to recover from the impact of Covid-19 but also now the additional challenges being faced including rising utility costs. The Rushcliffe Business Partnership provides regular events and networking so local businesses can support each other. The networking which is held twice a month attracts around 40 local businesses and officers from the Council attend to provide support.
- 4.37 In addition, support is being provided to high street businesses including digital business advisor one to one support and webinars as well as funding for things such as shop front improvements, new equipment and the installation of sustainability measures. Businesses can apply for up to £5k and match funding is required This grant funding is alongside the other UKSPF

and REPF grant funding pot which offers grants of between £5k and £40k and is open to businesses and community organisations in the Borough.

- 4.38 A Recruiting Talent event was held in January 2023 which attracted local businesses to hear from a range of speakers including Rushcliffe's Chief Executive. The focus of this event is inclusive recruitment and the benefits that this can bring for businesses.
- 4.39 The UKSPF and REPF funding which the Borough Council has received from Government has 3 priority themes: communities and place, business support and people and skills. This funding replaces European Structural Investment Funding which had a focus on people and skills and business support. There has been a lot of support offered over the last few years to upskill people and help them access employment and training. This activity has been previously commissioned by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. However, as UKSPF and REPF is allocated to local authorities there is an opportunity for the Council to review support provided previously and shape future provision ensuring it is right for the residents of the Borough.

Housing and related support

- 4.40 Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of our residents, their families, and our communities. A key focus of the Housing Delivery Plan (2022-2027) and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-2027) is the ongoing collaboration between stakeholders across Nottinghamshire to ensure a system wide approach to reducing inequalities and challenges faced by vulnerable groups.
- 4.41 Over the last 5 years the Council in partnership with others statutory and voluntary sector providers have responded positively to the challenges and additional duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and more recently the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This has been achieved by expanding and creating new pathways to services for the most vulnerable groups, including rough sleepers, career leavers, ex-offenders and survivors of domestic abuse through the provision of specialist support and settled accommodation.
- 4.42 Adaptations to the home and the provision of supported and extra care accommodation will assist elderly and disabled persons who need a degree of support to remain independent in their homes. Ongoing collaboration with health, social services and housing will ensure a more coordinated approach to meet health and housing needs for vulnerable groups whilst reducing the demand for acute NHS and other services.
- 4.43 The Council is a member of the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and supports the asylum and refugee resettlement programmes to honour national commitments to ensure those brought to the UK can settle and integrate as quickly as possible. This includes the asylum dispersal, UK Resettlement Scheme, the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Hong Kong British National (Overseas) programme, Ukrainian, Syrian, and Afghan resettlement schemes.

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	There is no link to this corporate priority
Sustainable Growth	There is no link to this corporate priority
The Environment	There is no link to this corporate priority

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