



Corporate Overview Group

Tuesday, 4 June 2024

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme update and Diversity Annual Report 2023 to 2024

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Summary

- 1.1. Following the adoption of the 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 every 12 months. This report provides that update, it was considered beneficial to combine this with the annual diversity report update which is also presented to Corporate Overview Group.
- 1.2. The information in the report compares the demographic information for the Borough, using the 2021 census information, with that of our workforce with this information being taken from the HR /Payroll system.
- 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 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 requirement on public authorities to consider 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. As this is a new approach to our EDI Scheme which is high level with a supporting action plan, it is important that Councillors have the opportunity to scrutinise this new approach and the work carried out to date.

4. Supporting Evidence

Ethnicity

- 4.1 A breakdown of the ethnicity of the Borough in comparison with the East Midlands and nationally is shown at Appendix A. As this is census data it is the same data that was presented to Corporate Overview Group in June 2023.
- 4.2 The Borough Council's workforce information shown at Appendix B shows that we currently broadly reflect the demographic of the Borough with 85% of RBC employees in the white British or white other ethnic group which is the same as for the residents of the Borough (white 89%). The figure for the Borough is slightly higher than that for the East Midlands (88%).

Age Profile

- 4.3 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%).
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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 53% 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 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% (a lot), and 18% (a little) see appendix A3.
- 4.7 The number of employees who declare they have a disability is the same as the previous year at 6%, the number has been increasing gradually over the last few years (5% or 17 in 2022/23 and now 20 in 2023/24). 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.

- 4.8 The Council is a Disability Confident Employer and reached the required criteria to be recredited this year enabling the Council to use the Disability Confident Employer badge until July 2026.

Gender and sex

- 4.9 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 (40% compared to 60%) 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 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.
- 4.11 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 2023 are shown at Appendix C (data for the previous year, up to March 2024, will not be available until July).
- 4.12 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 (8.63%). This is the second consecutive year when the female mean is higher than the male.

Applicants

- 4.13 As well as monitoring information for 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.
- 4.14 This information is included at Appendix D and it shows that in 2023/24 there were around 300 more applicants for jobs at the Council than in the previous year. It is thought that this is possibly due to a few factors:
- the number of people in the UK looking for work has risen as job vacancies fall
 - The Council advertised a few roles that received over 60 applications for each role which is unusual. That said the quality of applicants has been poor in some instances with people applying who do not meet the minimum requirements
 - The Council have improved its benefits package resulting in applicants moving from nearby authorities

4.15 The data shows that, of those that choose to declare, the majority of applicants to the Council are white British or other white (66%). Most are heterosexual (79%). There are more male applicants (52%) than female (41%) and the majority (89%) are not disabled. Finally, the majority are aged between 25 and 34 (28%). This is lower than the current employee age range where the majority are in the 45 to 54 age range.

Councillors

4.16 As requested at Corporate Overview Group in 2022, information about Councillors is now included at Appendix E.

4.17 This shows that the majority of Councillors are male (66%) and this has remained the same since the election in May 2023. 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.

4.18 Ethnicity information is not currently recorded for Councillors and therefore this information is not available for sharing.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

4.19 The EDI Scheme which was adopted in May 2021 has 4 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.

4.20 To support the delivery of these aims, the Council identified some commitments which were:

- Understanding our community
- Reflecting the diversity of our community
- Working in partnership to achieve impact
- Supporting our workforce.

4.21 The actions within the action plan (Appendix E) are separated into actions against these commitments, as previously presented. This will enable us to measure the level of activity in each area and where we may need to shift focus to ensure we are delivering on all of our commitments.

4.22 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 Scrutiny Group to feed into future plans.

- 4.23 The Corporate Overview Group has received updates previously, most recently in June 2023. Like this report, they detailed work undertaken over the previous 12 months. For the benefit of new members to the Group some of the areas covered include:
- The Borough Council's website is now fully accessible
 - A session on local democracy was held for 30 year 10 students from Toothill
 - Work to try and re-establish the Rushcliffe Community Cohesion Network
 - Recruiting Talent event hosted alongside Building Better Opportunities to promote inclusive recruitment to local businesses
 - The review of the customer contact points as a part of the Customer Services Strategy
 - Work of the Active Rushcliffe Health Partnership and their work to target priority groups e.g. women and girls
 - Review of recruitment policy to try and make applying for roles at the Council to be as accessible as possible
 - The installation of changing places toilets at Rushcliffe Country Park, Gresham and most recently Cotgrave Leisure Centre.
- 4.24 The Council has established a Steering Group which includes officers from different departments across the Council including Community Development, HR and Communications. The Group meets quarterly to review and update the action plan. The Group is supported by East Midlands Councils (EMC) who provide updates on any new legislation the Group need to be aware of as well as share best practise from other councils.
- 4.25 The updated action plan can be found at Appendix F which covers the different initiatives delivered or supported by the Council as a part of the EDI Scheme. The following paragraphs in the report focus on some of the actions included in the plan to provide a little more detail.
- 4.26 The organisation is aware of the need to consider the impact of decisions it makes on the people it represents and also the workforce it employs. To this end, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are undertaken on key policies and strategies. This process has been reviewed as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme and officers will undertake online refresher training to provide guidance on the revised process. The process is now broken down into 2 parts, the first stage provides the opportunity to ask some key questions that show EDI has been considered and identifies if a more detailed review is required. The EDI Steering Group will review any completed EIA's to provide independent challenge to the process.
- 4.27 Using UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), the Council delivered a Moon Festival celebration event in Bingham. This was to support Hong Kongers who have moved into the area, particularly on the new development to the north of the town. In addition, the Council hosted a Lunar New Year event in February 2024 in West Bridgford, both events proved to be very popular with the Lunar New Year event attracting approximately 2000 people.
- 4.28 A review of EDI training that is undertaken by staff as well as councillors has been undertaken. Proposals have been made to Member Development Group

for training and this includes Equality Diversity and Inclusion delivered by East Midlands Councils For employees additional training has been identified including:

- EDI awareness – online and for all staff
- British sign language – for some frontline staff including Customer Services
- Neurodiversity training – initially with managers and team leaders and then to be rolled out to all staff
- EIA's – online for most staff as above at paragraph 4.26

4.29 This year sees the implementation of a new Supporting our Employees policy with a number of separate guidance documents on areas such as Domestic Abuse and Menopause, and currently developing guidance on supporting employees with neuro diversity. We're also in the early stages of working towards the White Ribbon accreditation.

4.30 A Youth Summit was held on 16 April 2024, all secondary schools were invited to attend and pupils asked to talk for around 5 minutes on issues that were important to them. South Wolds and Toothill schools attended on the night and 11 groups of students spoke to a room of their peers as well as Councillors, Officers and some invited guests. The issues identified will be used to inform the work of the Rushcliffe Youth Forum and it is hoped the session will have attracted more young people to be part of the Forum.

4.31 There are a number of projects that are designed to support our communities which have been funded using the UKSPF allocated to the Council. This includes:

- Green Doctor delivered by Groundwork to support residents to identify ways to improve energy efficiency and so reduce bills. The service also provides broader financial advice and support and signposts to other services for support
- Transform Your Future programme being delivered by Nottinghamshire Futures. This is an employment and skills support programme for people in the Borough who are currently not in work, education or training
- Funding of up to £1,000 for residents to access training to upskill/reskill
- A programme of training being delivered across the borough focussed on low carbon, digital skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

4.32 Rushcliffe is working together to become a Dementia Friendly Community. The Council is working with partners, stakeholders and community and voluntary organisations to improve the support available to people living with dementia and their carers:

- The Council are working closely with Nottinghamshire Carers Association to achieve the Carer Friendly Employer Quality Award. This has so far involved training and equipping 4 Carers Champions in the workplace as well as looking at HR policies
- Dementia Friends and Carer Awareness Training have been delivered to council employee's including the executive management team and will be

rolled out bi-annually as well as having optional e-learning modules via the employee learning pool

- Additionally, the training is widely promoted across the borough to local businesses, community and voluntary organisations and the public, plus sessions are promoted in the Rushcliffe Big Green Book to enable our community to be more inclusive
- We have awarded funding to a number of projects to support people living with memory loss and their carers, such as The Joyful Jukebox, Bloomin' Dementia, Dementia Information Programme for Carers and The Green Memory Café which takes place bi-monthly at Rushcliffe Country Park
- The Council's flagship publication includes a dedicated page to the Dementia Friendly project to raise awareness and highlight advice and support for people affected by dementia. We have also featured a dementia friendly theme at several community based events and the town and parish council forum
- Dementia Friendly walkthroughs have taken place at all leisure premises across the borough designed to support a safe and welcoming environment for people affected by dementia
- The Council regularly promotes and shares dementia and carer information and resources through our network channels to partners, stakeholders, residents.

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

No financial implications arise 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.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no direct Biodiversity Net Gain implications arising from this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	There are no links to this priority from this report.
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 are no links to this priority from this report.
Sustainable Growth	There are no links to this priority from this report.

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:	Catherine Evans Service Manager Economic Growth and Property 0115 914 8552 cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	Rushcliffe Borough Councils Equality Scheme 2021 to 2025
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix A Demographic Information Appendix B Rushcliffe Borough Council Workforce Equality Information. Appendix C Gender Pay gap information Appendix D Applicants information Appendix E Councillors information Appendix F EDI Action Plan