

Shropshire Council Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016 to 2020

Progress Report to Cabinet APPROVED 06072020

Overall Strategic Action A: publish more visibly

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>A. i.) Organise online resource materials on equalities, diversity and social inclusion into one location on the external website at www.shropshire.gov.uk,</p> <p>This is so that information is presented as logically and visibly as possible, with links to further material that may be helpful, and keep under review to ensure timeliness and relevance.</p>	Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Digital Services Team	July 2014, with review every three months thereafter	<p>The web location for content is badged: “equality, diversity and social inclusion”</p> <p>The focus is on the internet, for internal and external audiences alike, whilst Council efforts continue to aid digital inclusion and offer alternatives such as support and advice via telephone.</p> <p>Content is kept under review, as are signposts to other parts of the Council website. Further material is added every year around Holocaust Memorial Day activities, whilst the annual diversity reports form a visible reference for changes over time.</p>
<p>A. ii.) Publish examples of Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) in one place on the website together with the refreshed guidance, in order to help internal and external audiences to understand what is expected and why, and in order to show use made of these impact assessments in decision making</p>	Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Digital Services Team	Ongoing	<p>Equality impact assessment materials have been revised every two years at timely stocktake moments. The templates are available on the website and on the Council intranet, together with examples.</p> <p>Further guidance was provided for all staff as part of mandatory online</p>

			<p>training, through a course package launched in autumn 2018.</p> <p>*This work area is an area for taking forward, as the Council agreed in 2020 to the introduction of health impact assessments, complementing climate change appraisals and ESIA materials.</p>
<p>A. iii.) Publish and present contextual equality information in a range of ways and through local, national and European opportunities that arise, in order to enable use to be made in corporate and service area policy and strategy development of all opportunities to aid social inclusion.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Communications Team; Service Areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Examples collated and online presence utilised, including partner organisation websites and Marches LEP website.</p> <p>Examples include area profiles shared with Members as community leaders and published on the website; Census profiles; and the annual service user and workforce diversity monitoring reports also published on the Council website.</p>
<p>A. iv.) Utilise appropriate communication channels including social media and face to face, in order to promote opportunities to foster good relations between people from diverse communities of place and interest as well as people with Protected Characteristics.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Digital Services Manager; Customer Service Team; Communications Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Examples collated and online presence utilised, including partner organisation websites and Marches LEP website. An example would be detail about Holocaust Memorial Day activities, published as press releases, and as a mini-site on the Council website, featured in local media and recorded on the national Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website. Other examples would be linkages made to support work to welcome Syrian refugees to the county.</p>

Overall Strategic Action B: collect and analyse more proactively

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary 2020
<p>B. i.) Analyse service user and community profile evidence base and report back in annual service user diversity reports, in order to prioritise where the gaps are in the evidence base and seek to fill them.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Service Areas</p>	<p>September 2016; reviews each year linked to annual service user diversity report</p>	<p>Comparison work into rural authority approaches utilises County Council network (CCN) and Rural Services network (RSN) resources, and opportunities to contribute to data collection. An example would be response made for the CCN report on Social Mobility, published in 2018.</p> <p>Service areas also make use of ESIIAs in order to collate and present evidence about the communities, service users and stakeholders with whom they work</p>
<p>B. ii.) Collect data about service user participation in service area activity and about participation by partner organisations and the wider community in service area activity and in public events including consultation opportunities</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit Manager; Rurality and Equalities Specialist; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Service Areas; Community and Voluntary Sector Assembly</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Collection involves usage of a standard monitoring chart at public events. The Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) has kindly acted as a pilot in this regard, and continues to use it at events. The chart has previously been used as an interactive and non-intrusive way to gather such information from members of the community in upwards of 40 community toolkit events within rural parishes and market towns. It was also adapted for use in adult social care consultation event involving service users and carers, where again it was used as an interactive tool with use of stickers.</p>

Key Action	By Whom	By When	Commentary 2020
<p>B. iii.) Analyse internal information on workforce, and compare with good practice authorities, in order to identify and comment on trends and prioritise where the gaps may be in representation within the workforce of groups with Protected Characteristics.</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team</p>	<p>September 2016; reviews each year linked to annual workforce diversity report</p>	<p>Comparison work is maintained as a watching brief. An example would be Coventry CC approaches towards supporting staff with disabilities requiring workplace adjustments, undertaken as part of office reorganisations there.</p> <p>Positive approaches towards recruitment and retention link to research into projected population shift in specific locations eg influx of students to University Centre Shrewsbury</p> <p>Shropshire Council introduced a Care Leaver Apprenticeship programme in 2018 to enable apprenticeship and development opportunities for Care Leavers and Looked After Children.</p> <p>The Council is part of the Apprenticeship Diversity Network and utilises this network and Apprenticeship Training Providers to advertise recruitment opportunities more widely across the County and beyond.</p>
<p>B. iv.) Identify good practice in training and guidance around discrimination, harassment or victimisation, including around recruitment, induction and retention, and where appropriate introduce this as part of Shropshire</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team</p>	<p>March 2016; reviews are linked to preparation of annual workforce</p>	<p>Research is undertaken into how other rural authorities, public sector organisations eg NHS Foundation Trusts, the private sector, and the voluntary and community sector approach training and guidance.</p>

<p>Council training programmes and briefings for officers and elected Members.</p>		<p>diversity report</p>	<p>This is shared with Human Resources, to particularly aid in appointing officer training, linked to safeguarding; in one-off support and guidance; in induction of new employees and elected Members.</p> <p>Training sessions were arranged for all Members in 2017. An online training module for all staff was developed as part of a mandatory package of training resources, rolled out in autumn 2018.</p>
<p>B. v.) Evaluate perceived effectiveness of briefings and training programmes, in order to ensure officers and Members feel equipped and encouraged to come forward where any such incidents occur</p>	<p>Human Resources Team; Performance Intelligence and Policy Team; Communications Team</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	<p>Discussions were undertaken into how this may best be achieved for town and parish councils, and bespoke training was provided through HR to councils that came forward.</p> <p>Members were asked for feedback following attendance at workshop sessions held in July 2017, following local elections.</p> <p>Staff feedback is obtained on completion of the module on equality, diversity and social inclusion, as with all other modules within the online training package developed and introduced in autumn 2018.</p> <p>Feedback has been positive in terms of views on content and approach, with</p>

			<p>practical suggestions made for improvement to technical operability as well as the sharing of perspectives based upon personal experiences.</p> <p>It is important to note that we do not have a gauge at present as to how well equipped staff and Members feel to deal with issues as they occur, a year and a half or more on from training, and that a stocktake would be timely.</p>
<p>B. vi.)Evaluate perceived effectiveness of communication methods for people experiencing or observing discrimination, harassment or victimisation, in order to ensure that service users and members of the public feel equipped to come forward where any such incidents occur, including perceived hate crime</p>	<p>Joint Agency Hate Crime Reporting Group; Community Safety Team; Feedback and Insight Team; Communications Team; Shropshire Council Service Areas</p>	<p>September 2016</p>	<p>Easy-to-understand hate crime reporting forms were progressed as an action through the Joint Agency Hate Crime Reporting Group, with leadership from Andrew Gough in achieving completion of this action.</p> <p>Evaluation was linked to corporate research into projected population shift in specific locations eg influx of students to the new university in Shrewsbury, and to support for work to welcome Syrian refugees to the county.</p> <p>It is important to add that whilst the Reporting Group no longer exists, data is still collected by the Police and reporting by individuals is encouraged through processes promoted on the Council's website.</p>

			*This work area is an area for taking forward, given spikes in hate crime incidents attributed to Brexit and potentially to the Covid-19 pandemic
B. vii.) Evaluate perceived effectiveness of refreshed inter agency hate crime reporting materials, in order to ensure officers and Members feel equipped and encouraged to make use of these and refer the community to these where any such incidents occur	Joint Agency Hate Crime Reporting Group; Community Safety Team; Feedback and Insight Team; Communications Team; Shropshire Council Service Areas	March 2017	Refreshed inter agency hate crime material formed part of a Cultural and Diversity Day in Shrewsbury in July 2015. Further discussions were undertaken through the Reporting Group into how training and support may best be achieved for Shropshire Council officers and Members. Guidance on hate crime was subsequently included in the online training course for staff. *This work area is an area for taking forward, given spikes in hate crime incidents attributed to Brexit and potentially to the Covid-19 pandemic
B. viii.) Establish current patterns of hate crime incident reporting, in order to help target inter agency efforts to collect and monitor such data, and to publicise reporting channels including online	Joint Agency Hate Crime Reporting Group; Community Safety Team; Communications Team	Ongoing	Research was undertaken through the Group to analyse levels of hate crime under reporting in the county. Progress reports were made to the Group. *This work area is an area for taking forward, given spikes in hate crime incidents attributed to Brexit and potentially to the Covid-19 pandemic

Overall Strategic Action C: work more jointly

Key Action	By whom	By when	Commentary
<p>C. i.) Share materials across sectors, in order to pool resources for maximum effect and increase understanding amongst the general public, service users and communities of the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Communications Team; Marches LEP Social Inclusion Mini Group; Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements</p>	<p>Ongoing; actions to be planned for 2016/2017</p>	<p>Explore feasibility of running joint sub-regional local events on specific topics, supported by officers in the Commissioning Unit to aid linkages across sectors and organisational boundaries eg mental well-being and employment, eg digital skills.</p> <p>Explore potential actions through the Marches LEP Social Inclusion Mini Group, to follow up on activity already completed.</p> <p>*This work area was not fully explored, and is an area for taking forward, adapting in order to maximise current and planned collaborative arrangements across sectors and across borders.</p>
<p>C. ii.) Promote Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January each year across the county and more widely</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Inter Faith Forums; Communications Team; Digital Services Team; Outdoor Recreation Team; libraries; primary and secondary schools and colleges..</p>	<p>January each year</p>	<p>Activities are focussed on work with primary schools and interfaith forums.</p> <p>There are now 12 trees in the HMD memorial cherry tree orchard being grown with schools across Shropshire</p> <p>Details about activities are published as press releases, as a mini-site on the</p>

			<p>Council website, and via the national Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website.</p> <p>The South Shropshire Interfaith Forum was also supported by the Council in a successful artwork project involving Syrian refugee families, which became one of the 75 Flames chosen for a national event in 2020 to mark the 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.</p>
<p>C. iii.) Continue to promote national events, in order to pool resources for maximum effect and increase understanding amongst the general public, service users and communities of the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Service Areas; Communications Team; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit officers monitor calendar details of key dates and events, and arrange briefings and or press releases as appropriate, utilising LGA, EHRC and other national resources.</p>
<p>C. iv.) Evaluate perceived effectiveness of joint local events and initiatives and joint promotion of national events in helping service users and communities to feel better equipped to recognise discrimination, harassment and victimisation against groups and individuals, and to feel better able to know what to do next.</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit; Service Areas; Communications Team; Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly; Marches LEP; other strategic and collaborative partnership working arrangements,</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	<p>Evaluation of Holocaust Memorial Day involves elected Members, the South Shropshire Interfaith Forum and the Shrewsbury Interfaith Forum, who are linked into the VCSA (Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly); local primary schools, and local Members for the schools involved.</p> <p>This takes place on an annual basis ahead of the next year's events.</p>

			This exemplar now needs to be replicated for other events such as Show Racism the Red Card, supported by the Council and Unite in 2019, and for future events or campaigns.
C. v.) Identify good partnership practices at local and national level in achieving progress towards the three national equality aims, ie.: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations, in order to aid Shropshire Council to meet its general equality duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty and to monitor application of corporate values.	Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team	March 2017	<p>Examples such as the NHS workforce race equality standard were utilised to develop materials, and in so doing to seek to help meet the three aims.</p> <p>The support that was anticipated for staff in understanding the PSED and in making use of ESIIAs for service changes, was incorporated into the online training module rolled out in autumn 2018.</p>
C. vi.) Identify good practice in training and guidance on developing and maintaining good relations, including around recruitment, induction and retention, and where appropriate, introduce this as part of Shropshire Council training programmes and briefings for officers and elected Members.	Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team	March 2016; reviews are linked to preparation of annual workforce diversity report	<p>Research is undertaken into how other rural authorities, public sector organisations, the private sector, and the voluntary and community sector approach training and guidance.</p> <p>This is shared with Human Resources, to particularly aid in appointing officer training, linked to safeguarding; in one-off support and guidance; in induction of new employees and elected Members.</p> <p>Training sessions were arranged for all Members in 2017, following elections that year.</p>

			<p>An online training module for all staff was developed as part of a mandatory package of training resources, rolled out in autumn 2018.</p> <p>There are additional courses for managers, delivered through HR, as well as an Equality Policy developed through HR and available on the intranet</p>
C. vii.) Evaluate increased understanding amongst officers and elected Members about the challenges faced by people with Protected Characteristics and people at risk of social exclusion	Human Resources Team; Rurality and Equalities Specialist, Performance Intelligence and Policy Team	March 2017	<p>Discussions were undertaken into how this may best also be achieved for town and parish councils, and bespoke training was provided through HR to councils that came forward.</p> <p>Members were asked for feedback following attendance at workshop sessions held in July 2017, following elections held that year.</p> <p>Staff feedback is obtained on completion of the module on equality, diversity and social inclusion, as with all other modules within the online training package developed and introduced in autumn 2018</p> <p>Feedback has been positive in terms of views on content and approach, with practical suggestions made for improvement to technical operability as</p>

			<p>well as the sharing of perspectives based upon personal experiences.</p> <p>It is important to note that we do not have a gauge at present as to how well equipped staff or Members feel to deal with issues as they occur, a year and a half or more on from training, and that a stocktake would be timely.</p>
C. viii.) Support positive joint approaches towards recruitment and retention of young people in local businesses across the sub region	Human Resources Team; Marches LEP Social Inclusion Mini Group	Ongoing, in line with Council and partnership objectives	<p>An increase in Shropshire Council Teams is creating apprenticeship opportunities for young people to access varied levels of apprenticeships including degree level courses to encourage retention of young people within the county i.e. Social Work, Chartered Surveyors etc.</p> <p>The Council's most recent graduate programme (2018-2020) supported them with development opportunities and additional qualifications via the Apprenticeship Levy.</p> <p>In 2020 Shropshire Council will look to implement the Levy Transfer with a priority to support hard to reach groups, those who have been affected by Covid-19, unemployed and NEETs and young people aged 16-19.</p>

			This all builds upon previous activity including a graduate scheme which ran at Shropshire Council, which saw 21 graduates placed between 2011 and 2015
C. ix.) Utilise appropriate communication channels including social media and face to face, in order to promote opportunities to foster good relations between people from diverse communities of place and interest and people with protected characteristics	Commissioning Unit; Customer Service Team; Digital Services Team; Communications Team	Ongoing	<p>Examples are collated and online presence utilised, including partner organisation and Marches LEP websites.</p> <p>One example is Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), which includes mini-site on the Council website, features on local media, and publicity and recording of activities on the national HMD Trust website, thereby raising the profile of Shropshire as a welcoming place as well as providing opportunity for young people to work with representatives of a range of faith communities.</p>