

Shropshire Council

Annual Service User Diversity Report 2020 to 2021

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A. Introduction

1. Our county and its people

Geography and demography

If you are looking for Shropshire on a map of the United Kingdom, you will need to look to the middle of England on the map, and then to the far west of Birmingham, just next to the middle of Wales. For our communities and businesses, travel to work patterns across our porous borders indicate large numbers travelling for work to the West Midlands, to the South and East, and North and North West, to Cheshire, Staffordshire and Manchester and beyond, as well as into Wales.

Shropshire is the second largest inland rural county in England, after Wiltshire, and one of the most sparsely populated. Shropshire is approximately ten times the size of all the Inner London Boroughs put together (31,929 hectares), with 1.02 persons per hectare and a population of 325,415 for a terrain covering 319,736 hectares (Source: ONS Census 2011, mid year estimates for 2020).

Around 57.2% of Shropshire's population lives in rural areas. There are 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, and Shrewsbury, the central county town. An additional dynamic is that, unlike for example Cumbria, the population is dispersed across the entire county, rather than there being any areas where no one lives at all.

Challenges and approaches

Being an inland county brings its own challenges. There is a dependency on a limited number of key arterial transport routes, for trade and supply including freight through the county to Wales and Ireland, or up to the North West, as well as for everyday transport for local communities and businesses. It is also quite literally exposed to extreme weather conditions, with roads that are liable to flooding, and a lack of viable alternatives leading to congestion and lengthy diversions.

The physical terrain poses practical challenges for digital and physical infrastructure, as well as the high service delivery costs and access issues associated with a dispersed and ageing population.

It is within this geographical context of cross border travel patterns, for residents, visitors, and businesses, that we develop and deliver services with and for our diverse communities. The exigencies of adjusting to external factors of climate change and political change including Brexit ramifications, and the economic and social upheaval continuing to be caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, are allied to the challenges of preserving and maximising our natural capital.

These external factors provide further context to our local strategic and collaborative approaches, which continue to be towards meeting rural and community needs, and in so doing achieving economic recovery and moving towards stability and growth. Additionally, there were Full Council elections during 2021, which led to a continued majority for the Conservatives but a change in Leader to a first female Leader.

Our collegiate approach is to collect and share evidence about community needs and how we are tackling them, with other local authorities, through channels such as the County Councils Network (CCN) and the Rural Services Network (RSN) We submit responses through these channels, to Parliamentary Select Committees, as well as directly to Government.

Deprivation and inequality

An emphasis on inequalities within society and within communities, including access to decent and energy efficient housing, healthcare, education and employment, whether by public or private transport or via digital means, should also include better national recognition of geographical and societal interdependencies rather than a separation out of different strands of policy.

If the pandemic has shown us anything, it is that we are more dependent upon each other and more vulnerable to a greater range of factors than could perhaps have been imagined.

A reflection on this genuinely universal truth, and a collective and cohesive approach towards the structures that we use to develop and deliver public sector services, should bring in an improvement in social mobility opportunities across the whole country, alongside environmental initiatives around green energy, longer term use of homeworking alongside reduced physical travel and greater recognition of hitherto hidden deprivation and dependencies.

Whilst Shropshire remains a relatively affluent location, albeit with pockets of deprivation, in terms of access to services, it is amongst the most deprived localities in the country. This is measured through the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019), which was released on 26th September 2019. This updates the IMD2015.

The IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Layer Super Output Areas or LLSOAs) in England. LLSOAs are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for the Census. They are areas consisting of a minimum of 1,000 to a maximum of 3000 population. There are, in all 39 separate indicators spread across 7 distinct domains of deprivation, which are weighted and combined to calculate the overall index of deprivation (IMD).

This is an overall measure of deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every LLSOA in England. All LLSOAs are then ranked according to their level of deprivation relative to other areas.

The higher the rank the more deprived an area is, so an area with a rank of 100 is more deprived than an area with a rank of 200. The IMD also contains two supplementary indexes Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI)

There is no definitive threshold of deprivation and the IMD measures deprivation on a relative not absolute scale, so a neighbourhood ranked as 100 is more deprived than an area ranked 200, but this doesn't mean that it is twice as deprived. There are 32,844 small areas (LLSOAs) in England with an average population of 1,500, where one is the most deprived and 32,844 the least. In Shropshire there are 193 LLSOAs with an average population of 1645

A snapshot analysis of the IMD2019 has been prepared by the Performance, Intelligence and Insight Team to give an overview of the results for Shropshire. This is available on the Council website. Reports have also been prepared for the Overall IMD and each of the seven Domains.

Shropshire has become slightly more deprived since 2015 with an increase in the average score from 16.7 in 2015 to 17.2 in 2019, an increase of 0.5. Shropshire is the 174th most deprived local authority in England out of a total of 317 lower tier authorities (rank of average score). This measure shows Shropshire has become relatively more deprived compared to other areas since 2015. Lower tier authorities include non metropolitan districts, London Boroughs, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts. Note in 2015 there were 326 lower tier local authorities whereas there are 317 in 2019.

When looking at the other two main measures of deprivation (rank of average rank and rank of proportion of LLSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally) these show Shropshire has also become slightly more deprived relative to other local authorities since 2015, however the rank is out of 317 authorities and in 2015 the rank was out of 326 authorities.

Compared to 2015, 33 LLSOAs had become more deprived in 2019, 19 had become less deprived and 141 had remained the same. This is a net change of 14 LLSOAs becoming more deprived. The largest net changes can be seen in the Income Domain where there was a net increase of 30 LLSOAs becoming more deprived also in the Barriers to Housing and Services there is a net change of 40 more LLSOAs had become more deprived and in the Income deprivation Affecting Children Sub-Domain there is a net change of 41 LLSOAs becoming more deprived.

In the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Sub-Domain there is a net change of 13 LLSOAs becoming less deprived and in health a net change of 25 LLSOAs becoming less deprived.

Whilst all seven domains help us to consider impacts in equality terms for our communities, it is pertinent from a social inclusion angle to note that the domains include Barriers to Housing and Services, Health Deprivation and Disability, and Income.

We said in our 2018 to 2019 report that further analyses of these would be an area of focus to help us in equality policy development. This was before the world changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing these policy areas into sharp focus and leading us to work more closely with health colleagues across a wider range of service areas than ever.

During 2021, we have begun work across the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System (ICS) to prepare Health Inequality Plans for the two respective local authorities, which will include consideration and use of IMD data.

2. The legislative framework in which we continue to operate

The **Equality Act 2010**, together with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, forms a framework of protection for equality, diversity, social inclusion and human rights.

Shropshire Council seeks to ensure that, like other public authorities, it is compliant with the **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**.

This **Duty**, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, may be described as the duty on a public authority, when carrying out its functions, to have what is called **due regard** to three equality aims.

These equality aims are listed below.

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity;

- Fostering good relations.

As a local authority, we must comply with both a general equality duty and with specific duties, as set out in the Act.

- To demonstrate full compliance with the general duty, we are required to publish annual information about our workforce and service user diversity.
- To demonstrate full compliance with the specific duties, we are required to publish one or more equality objectives which we think we should achieve.

The frequency for these objectives to be published is a minimum of every four years.

2020 saw the preparation and publication of our **Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2020 to 2024**, approved by Cabinet on 6th July 2020. This enables positioning of the Council to assist in efforts to meet its PSED, seek to demonstrate good practice in so doing, and facilitate timely links with corporate and national policy and strategy development, not least around endeavours to address health inequalities and to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination.

The regulations also specify that a listed authority must publish its equality information and equality objectives in a manner which is accessible to the public and may publish this information within another published document. Our diversity reports are on the Council website, along with the equality objectives action plans for 2016 to 2020 and for 2020 to 2024. These are in the section on “equality, diversity and social inclusion”, along with further background and complementary information about this policy area. Further information and practical guidance is available for our workforce on our staff intranet.

The Equality Act describes a number of **Protected Characteristics** groupings ie characteristics that people may share. Local authorities such as ourselves and other public sector organisations are obliged under the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the needs of people in these groupings in our decision making processes. The nine groups are, in alphabetical order:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

Social inclusion

Whilst there are nine national Protected Characteristics with regard to individuals in groupings of people in the community, as set out under the Equality Act 2010, we add a tenth one as a Council, around social inclusion. This then brings in households as well as individuals, and reflects the circumstances in which people may find themselves.

What we mean by this in Shropshire.

The social inclusion category is intended to help the Council to think as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people that may be described as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns.

The grouping explicitly encompasses members of the armed forces, whether serving or veterans, and their families; children and young people who are or were looked after by the local authority, including those who have left the care of the local authority and are making their way in the world; refugees and asylum seekers; and households who for whatever reason are finding life to be difficult.

This may be a rural household, for whom issues as diverse as fuel poverty, loneliness, lack of access to services and facilities and lack of opportunities for training and employment may be affecting their physical and emotional well-being. We know from the evidence that we gather from across a range of sources that loneliness may as easily affect people in one of our market towns, particularly at either end of the age spectrum, despite their being seemingly close to services and social interactions. This is exacerbated by a lack of assured digital connectivity across the county.

B. Progress across our action areas

Our Council-wide equality actions are framed across the following three areas, and we report on them in this way accordingly:

- Publish equality and diversity information more visibly;
- Collect and analyse equality and diversity data more proactively;
- Work jointly with partner organisations on equality-related issues.

1. Local progress during 2021

The Council sets out to demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in Protected Characteristic groupings and people at risk of social exclusion, and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

The Corporate Equality Objectives Action Plan 2020 to 2024 report to Cabinet for July 2020, which demonstrated our open and transparent approach, provides a

visible way in which to chart the progress that we are seeking to make to meet the national equality aims during the period 2020 to 2024.

During this first year of the action plan, the following examples illustrate the efforts that we are making across a number of Protected Characteristics and in relation to our main activity area of combatting racism and other forms of discrimination.

Workforce and elected member training

The overall proposal in 2020 was for a tri phase approach involving:

- an update of online training for staff and for elected Members,
- closer links with NHS staff through the ICS on where we could potentially work together given crossover with health and social care impacts of Covid-19 on Protected Characteristic groupings in the community and for staff within Protected Characteristic Groupings.
- delivery by an external facilitator of face to face or online interactive seminars with senior managers, plus an approach to update of member training, ahead of delivery of face to face training to the new cohort after elections next May.

The online training course for elected members was completely updated ahead of the elections in May 2021. It has an explicit focus upon reflective learning, through use of scenarios and case studies for members to work through at their own pace and within their own space. This is allied to a recognition that equality can be an awkward topic on which to share perspectives in an open arena, and that it is more important to build confidence and competencies to enable elected Members to be community leaders with regard to equality matters. The Rurality and Equalities Specialist delivered a series of half hour briefings to elected Members in order to introduce the topic, and to highlight the online training and other resources for elected Members to draw upon.

For the workforce, the priority this year has been to similarly seek to equip managers and leaders with the confidence and competencies to be better able to recognise racism and discrimination wherever it is encountered, whether in the community or in the workforce, and to encourage ongoing conversations within and across service areas about racism.

Shropshire Council was delighted to welcome Patrick Vernon OBE to the county on Wednesday 20th October, to share his unique experience and insight as a high-profile national commentator, campaigner and cultural historian, in an Expert Seminar at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury. Staff from the Council formed the audience at the Theatre, in reduced numbers due to Covid restrictions, with a livestream audience joining in virtually from other public sector and business sector organisations across the region as well as from the Council.

The two hour session focussed on how individuals and organisations can better understand various forms of racism, as well as racial bias and the issues affecting the black community in the context of the current geopolitical climate and black history. Patrick brought his knowledge, as co-author of “100 Great Black Britons”, of

the richness of this history, and the intention will be to build upon the learning from this Seminar during 2022.

We are continuing to work with our colleagues in the NHS to progress relevant training and other actions to tackle issues such as ageism and sexism, and discrimination on grounds of religion and belief, as well as experiences of racism amongst the workforce, including from those who use our services.

This is enabling us to continue our explicit visible emphasis on accelerating efforts to make progress on tackling racism within an overall corporate and partnership equality policy framework.

Raising awareness of the diversity of race, religion and beliefs in Shropshire

In 2020, we outlined that there would be a focus for 2021 upon continued support for national events and activities including around Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) on 27th January, and Remembering Srebrenica Day in July, and Show Racism the Red Card Day in October, through means such as proactive communications campaigns with other local authorities, and across sectors.

In the light of Covid restrictions in the early part of the year, the HMD cherry tree for 2021 was planted by one of our arboriculturists at our chosen school for the year, during the February half term, rather than in an ecumenical ceremony on the Day. However, we were able to hold a tree planting ceremony with representatives of the armed forces and with the inter faith forums in Shropshire, at Shirehall in the July, in order to commemorate the role of the local armed forces in the liberation of Bergen-Belsen and in humanitarian efforts in Srebrenica.

The ceremony also involved children from Mereside School, where the first cherry tree in our Shropshire memorial orchard was planted. They shared how they continue to look after their tree as a school community, and they dressed the Srebrenica tree with their promises around being kind and around never forgetting the lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides.

During 2021, the Council worked with NHS colleagues on a joint equality and diversity calendar, in order to prepare for and share resources and energies on activities to either commemorate significant dates or celebrate cultures and beliefs.

Additionally, the Council worked with Telford and Wrekin Council and with Wolverhampton City Council on events to mark South Asian Heritage Month in July-August, and Black History Month in October.

For the latter, the Council also worked with Shropshire Archives and with the Windrush Generation, with the following an illustration of ongoing efforts:

- An exhibition of pictures and memories from and by the Windrush Generation toured Telford and Wrekin Libraries, as part of Black History Month events.
- Diane Drummond, the local organiser and curator of the Windrush Exhibition website at www.windrushexhibitiontelford.co.uk, sent out a call for any stories

from people in Shropshire who may like to contribute to this exhibition with their own memories, or those of any family members who came over as part of the Windrush Generation.

- The phrase “Windrush Generation” is used to seek to describe anybody arriving in the UK between 1948 and 1971, from Caribbean countries. It refers to the ship MV Empire Windrush, which docked at Tilbury on 22 June 1948, bringing workers from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and other islands, to help fill post-war UK Labour shortages. (Source; BBC News)
- The Hive in Shrewsbury were also loaned a version of the Exhibition, to be displayed at their Black History Month exhibition under the guidance and brand of the Windrush Exhibition Telford. The Exhibition will continue to collect submissions, and also offer the use of it to schools, colleges, organisations etc by agreement.
- Census records in Shropshire Archives have revealed that although the numbers arriving in what was Shropshire County are small, there was a real range of people arriving from countries in the Caribbean, as well as from other countries in the Commonwealth. The 1951 census has just 17 recorded as being from Caribbean countries, whereas the 1971 census shows 530 from Caribbean countries. These included Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. By way of contrast, the 1971 Census records indicate slightly more from the Commonwealth countries of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, with 590, and 355 from Commonwealth countries in Africa.

In terms of awareness raising about diversity of religions and beliefs, the Council marked the following during 2021, and is making plans to mark Chinese New Year and Buddhism dates of significance during 2022.

- Christmas (Christianity)
- Diwali Festival of Lights (Hindu, Sikh and Jainism)
- Gypsy and Traveller History Month (traditional way of life and beliefs)
- Hanukkah Festival of Lights (Judaism)
- Ramadan and Eid (Islam)
- South Asian Heritage Month (cultures)

The following was a featured press release as well as an item on the staff intranet to raise awareness of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community.

June 2021: Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month

June 2021 is Gypsy Roma and Traveller History month, and has been celebrated nationally since 2008. In Shropshire, it has provided the opportunity for Shropshire Council to commend the local community for their positive approaches to the pandemic. The community has actively participated in the Covid-19 vaccination programme, helping to reduce local risks of infection. Gypsy and traveller families have also worked together to donate food to local foodbanks.

John Taylor, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, said:

“People may be surprised to learn that the community in Shropshire is really a very settled community, with families living either on privately and family-owned sites or on council plots on one of the four sites that we operate, plus a small number in bricks and mortar accommodation. There are 151 plots altogether. Many in the community are self-employed, with others employed in jobs ranging from hauliers to teaching assistants and pretty much everything in between, no different to anyone else really.”

National Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month aims to:

- Raise awareness and explore the history, culture and language of travelling communities
- Challenge myths, tackle prejudice and have balanced debates about all issues
- Celebrate the richness that GRT communities bring to everyday lives

Undertaking equality, social inclusion and health impact assessments

The legal context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three national equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they would usually go to Strategic Licensing Committee for elected member consideration.

The local context

Since 2014, our equality impact screening assessment has encompassed consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

The template in use in Shropshire since then has been referred to as the Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment, or ESIIA, accordingly.

Changes over time to the template content and to its title

The screening template is reviewed every year in order to take account of the local factors we have mentioned, and in order to adjust it in the light of feedback from service areas about which bits they are finding tricky and which bits are working well.

- In 2018, we added in economic and environmental considerations, and a box in which to reference related ESIIAs. This has worked well in terms of showing consideration of equality and social inclusion impacts within and across service areas;
- In 2019, we strengthened the environmental aspect, through asking service areas to include within the template the full text of the climate change appraisal text from the committee reports that they accompany;
- In May 2020, we added in a request to consider health and well being within overall economic and environmental considerations;
- In November 2020, we added in specific references within our social inclusion category to the needs of veterans and serving members of the armed forces, as a vulnerable grouping;
- For December 2021 onwards, we made a further change, which will affect not only the content but also the title for the impact assessment template.
- It is now referred to as the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment, or ESHIA.

Rationale for the change

In our Strategic Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2020-2024, approved by Cabinet in July 2020, we identified this work as a specific action to address, as follows:

**Overall Strategic Action B: collect and analyse more proactively
*Incorporate health and well-being assessments into equality and social inclusion impact assessments for service areas, in order to equip service areas to have due regard to the three aims when considering and planning service changes, and to link in with climate change appraisals to form a coherent suite of materials***

Our revisions will bring health and well being more to the fore, as part of the work that we do with partners through the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System (ICS), to ensure that health is within all our policies.

It will visibly demonstrate that we are working together to address health inequalities for people in Protected Characteristic groupings, and across all communities.

These inequalities have been brought into sharper focus during the course of the ongoing pandemic, particularly for people in the Protected Characteristics of Age, Disability, and Race, and for the vulnerable households and individuals that we seek to consider in our category of Social Inclusion.

These revisions also very much sit alongside our continued efforts to keep the screening template proportionate for our service areas to complete when they are proposing a service change such as a new policy, a revised strategy or the introduction of new national legislation.

The template was revised and relaunched as of 1st December 2021 with attendance guidance, in liaison with Public Health colleagues and with further support from the Wales Health impact Assessment Support Unit.

2. Local proposals for 2022

It is the policy intention to continue to work at weaving together a number of actions utilising the three main activity strands. A main area of focus will be on the active use of the very much anticipated release of Census 2021 data, alongside other data collected in house or available at national level for use as a potential cipher for the local position.

Our Census specialist has advised the following:

- the Census data will start being released in March 2022
- in relation to the protected characteristics, the Census includes data on religion, ethnicity, national identity, country of birth, passports held, gender identity, sexual orientation (voluntary questions), disability, main language and how well this is spoken, age and migration.
- this data will later become available in cross tabulations, so that analysis will be possible against other variables such as occupation, car ownership, dwelling type, tenure, general health, voluntary carers, economic activity etc.

We will also draw upon other data and research, including the following:

- School Census for Shropshire data is collected three times a year, with each census collecting slightly different data to build an overall picture. For this, information is collected on things like date of birth, ethnicity, gender, whether the children have special education needs, etc.
- DWP publication on their website of some data on benefit claimants by age / ethnic group / disability.
- ONS undertaking of the Annual Population Survey. This includes an ethnic group breakdown, but as this is a sample survey and the ethnic group population is so small in Shropshire, the data doesn't meet the required confidence intervals for it to be published for Shropshire.
- Ethnicity / age data collected for HomePoint (waiting list, homelessness). This is also summarised on the MHCLG webpages (by ethnicity / age / banding).

A further source for us is service area information. For example, when we are looking at the intersectionality of the Protected Characteristics of Marriage and Civil Partnership and Sexual Orientation, local data sources include Registrars Service. Their data on civil partnerships and same sex marriages is one of the few ways we have at present of getting a more than anecdotal feel for the extent of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in Shropshire.

The first country where same sex marriage became legal was the Netherlands, in 2001. Staying in Europe, same sex marriage did not become legal in Finland and Germany until 2017.

The number of same sex marriages in Shropshire in 2017 was 43. In 2018, there were 51 same sex marriages, 6 Civil Partnerships, and 2 conversions of CP to marriage. 2019 saw 39 same sex marriages, 5 Civil Partnerships, and 1 conversion of CP to marriage. 2020 and 2021 figures are affected by the pandemic so are not included in this trend data. Also note that opposite sex Civil Partnerships came into law in January 2020.

As ever in the proactive collection of data and in the establishment and maintenance of a truly robust evidence base, there are a number of challenges to consider, for us as a Council and in partnership with Public Health and NHS colleagues across the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System.

1. Make sure everyone is using the same definitions. Otherwise you will be trying to compare apples with pears.
2. Whilst completeness is the aim, recognise there can be limitations. These can be system limitations and client willingness to permit use.
3. Develop means to identify areas of data weakness – incomplete, inaccurate etc.
4. Develop action plans to address any areas of weakness

C. Concluding Remarks

We hope that you have found this report to be interesting and useful, and we look forward to taking this and other opportunities to continue to report on progress in meeting our local equality objectives, and in so doing serving to aid achievement of the national equality aims.

This annual service user diversity report forms part of efforts to continue to increase the depth, breadth and focus of the evidence base about the people who live and work in Shropshire.

Together with its sister report on workforce diversity, these tandem reports set out to share information and statistics about the diversity of Shropshire Council's service users and communities, and to complement each other. This is not least as the workforce is largely drawn from local communities who therefore experience the services of the Council in their day to day lives.

Table one: this is a table to show the ten groupings of people whose needs Shropshire Council thinks about in particular in its decision making processes

Main definitions source: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Protected Characteristic	Definition
Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and civil partnership	In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. [1]. This is also true in Scotland where relevant legislation has been brought into force. [2]. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Protected Characteristic	Definition
Religion and belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex	A man or a woman
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Social inclusion (additional grouping in Shropshire)	Families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people considered to be vulnerable, ie having complex needs and/or requiring additional support; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families; young people leaving care.

[1] Section 1, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013; [2] Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014.