

# Shropshire Council

## Annual Service User Diversity Report 2016 to 2017

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## **Part one: context**

### **a.) Local policy context**

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

This **Public Sector Equality 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:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advancing equality of opportunity; and
- fostering good relations.

The legislation states that a listed authority must comply with both a general equality duty and with specific duties, as set out in the Act.

To demonstrate compliance with the **specific duties**, the Council publishes annual information about workforce diversity and service user diversity, as tandem reports. Previous yearly reports are available and listed as such in order to facilitate trend analysis. The service user report and the workforce reports are published online on the Shropshire Council website at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

The 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.

The Council is also required to show that it is working towards corporate equality objectives that will help to achieve any of the things mentioned in the general equality duty. These are set out in the **Shropshire Council Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016/2020**, which is published on the Council website, and described in more detail in the section on Activities in this report

The Equality Objectives Action Plan 2016/2020 enables up to date positioning of the Council to assist in efforts to meet our general duty; to seek to demonstrate good practice in so doing; and to facilitate timely links with other corporate policy and strategy development, utilising the core value of Equality and Inclusion as set out in the **Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2016/2017**.

This value is defined as: *“Treating everyone as equal regardless of their circumstances and backgrounds, and identifying and helping people who may need support”*.

The 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. This helps the Council to maintain its strategic and service area level data in order to be positioned to meet future ambitions, challenges and opportunities such as public sector reform, devolution, potential impacts of Brexit, etc.

Service delivery arrangements in Shropshire involve opportunities to ensure that service usage data can be systematically recorded by Council colleagues in service areas across the ten groupings of people whose needs Shropshire Council thinks about in particular in its decision making processes. This includes the nine groupings described as having what are termed Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

When we talk about these '**Protected Characteristics**' groupings, they are something that we look at as well as social inclusion when considering the PSED obligations. 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.

As with all of our communities of place and interest, we aim to involve people in ways in which they may want to be involved, can be encouraged to do so, and are able to do so, in order to support and sustain them as resilient communities. Our focus on locality working that recognizes our rurality and sparsity and the diversity of our communities relates directly to this aim.

The Rurality and Equalities Specialist, based in Commissioning Support Services, liaises with colleagues who are specialists in the fields of data acquisition, customer insight, performance and intelligence. This is in order to take opportunities to collate the equality and diversity information that is collected, and to collectively analyse what the data is telling us about our communities and about the diverse groupings within our communities.

This helps the Council to understand likely barriers to accessing services, and to plan how to respond to and cater for the diverse and changing needs of diverse and changing communities. It also helps the Council to uphold agree corporate value of equality and social inclusion

### **b.) National policy context**

Organisations are expected by national and international governments and bodies to have policies and practices that address equality and diversity effectively, and that place these matters at the heart of all decision making processes.

For Shropshire Council, equality is about using national laws and policies alongside local commitments to protect human rights and to seek to remove unfairness and discrimination.

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

We therefore endeavour to have due regard to this national equality policy, as well as utilising national research, including via the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other national sources, and to make appropriate and timely links into national policy and practice. We respond to calls for evidence from Government Departments and make submissions to parliamentary select committee inquiries, to seek to shape Government and local policy, as well as participating in calls for evidence from bodies such as the Local Government Association (LGA), the County Councils Network (CCN), and the Rural Services Network (RSN).

### **c.) Community context**

Shropshire is a large and predominantly rural county, with just under one person per hectare (0.98 persons; 313,400 population; source ONS mid year estimates 2016), for a terrain covering 319,736 hectares. The county size is approximately ten times that of all Inner London Boroughs (31,929 hectares; source ONS Census 2011).

Around 34% of Shropshire's population lives in villages, hamlets and dwellings dispersed throughout the countryside. The remainder live in one of the 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, or in Shrewsbury, the central county town.

Whilst all inhabitants expect equitable access to services, facilities, learning and training opportunities, and support and advice mechanisms, including online, the reality is that digital connectivity remains an issue for the county as for other rural counties.

Transport also poses practical challenges within Shropshire and across its borders to Cheshire and Staffordshire to the north, Wales to the west, Herefordshire and Worcestershire to the south and east, and across its eastern flank to Telford and Wrekin and the West Midlands. This is due to dependence on key arterial road routes that are liable to flooding, limited public transport, and nature of the often hilly terrain. High transport costs and service delivery costs arise accordingly, given these digital and physical challenges, not only for householders and businesses but also for commissioners and providers of services including adult social care and community mental health care.

## **Part two: governance**

### **a.) Elected Members**

#### ***Summary***

Elections were held for all electoral divisions in Shropshire in May 2017. Of the 76 councillors subsequently elected, some are new and some have been returned to their seats. There have been changes in the members now holding portfolio responsibilities at Cabinet level, and changes in how the scrutiny functions of the council are delivered. Full details are on the website.

#### ***Training and support***

As Equality is a mandatory subject area in terms of training for councillors, it was accordingly set up as an offer across three session slots. Take up was 30 councillors out of 76. Feedback was sought from councillors at the close of each session.

Sessions themselves have been seen as practical and interesting and as giving councillors the chance to participate. Rather than run through the contextual slides to share how the Council complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, we sought to focus on four participative questions around community leadership, alongside use of cards with key equality facts for councillors about their areas, taken from the new area profiles.

We then linked this to the Protected Characteristic groupings and shared corporate activity with regard to equality and diversity, telling them about activities such as work with schools to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, and work with service areas such as use of Equality and Social Inclusion Impact assessments (ESIAs). We also sought to use the sessions in order to pick up any concerns about radicalism.

Councillors stated via the feedback forms that they enjoyed the participation elements and the chance to find out a bit more about their area, and/or demonstrate their knowledge of same.

Briefing material following on from the training are currently being produced for member bulletins, highlighting service area responses to common equality queries. This has to date included items on school catchment areas and how schools operate admissions criteria, looking at this from an equality perspective.

Councillors are also being supported in terms of equality issues through use of online training and support resources.

### **b.) Workforce**

#### ***Summary***

This is an extract from the sister report on workforce diversity, which contains further tables of data and analyses about the workforce

- The BME makeup of our workforce has remained unchanged over the last 12 months at 1% of the workforce with a few minor variances to the individual categories within the BME group. Headcount has continued to reduce however on a much smaller scale as in previous years.
- In terms of the percentage of employees declaring a disability this has reduced slightly from last year. However the number of leavers the organisation has had overall of employees with a disability has reduced (52 last year compared to 31 this year).
- Shropshire Council is committed to promote equality within the workforce and also in our recruitment policies. Our Equality policy is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it is in keeping with up to date changes in legislation and relevance to our organisation is maintained. Shropshire Council's Equality Policy is available to all staff, via the intranet and is promoted across the organisation, as well as being publicly available through the "Equality, Diversity and Social inclusion" pages on the Council website at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

### ***Training and support***

2017 has seen the introduction of a new on line learning and development tool rolled out across the Council. Employees can request and book themselves on to training courses, with the approval of their line Manager. There is now a mix of face to face and online training courses making learning and development much more accessible to all employees enabling a greater flexibility on when and where employees can access training modules.

In addition to the introduction of the on line learning tool, Shropshire Council have launched an apprenticeship framework incorporating 600+ apprenticeship standards and 15 apprenticeship providers. The providers are a mix of both local and national and offer flexibility in the way they will deliver apprenticeships to meet the needs of the organisation as well as working with us to develop apprenticeships for the future and providing a greater flexibility to all employees in accessing apprenticeships.

The Council has joined the national Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network which commits to making a change to the diversity and inclusion of apprenticeships both internally and externally, improving social mobility while building a skilled, diverse workforce.

Corporate objectives include providing opportunities for our Looked After Children (LAC), clients with learning difficulties (part of a national Pacesetter project) and supporting Managers and Leaders within the organisation. Directorate Management Teams have been drafting Workforce Plans which identify the future skills required of the workforce and using the apprenticeship levy to fund this where possible.

## **Part three: activities**

### **a.) Background**

The **Shropshire Council Equality Objectives Action Plan** is a key strand of the corporate and partnership approach of Shropshire Council towards continuing compliance with the PSED.

The Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2016/2020 sets out ways in which the Council may demonstrate application of and adherence to local corporate values, and ongoing progress towards achieving the national equality aims.

The **progress that we are making** here in Shropshire builds upon the first Equality Objectives Action Plan 2012/2016, endorsed by Cabinet back in 2012. This was updated in 2014, following a mid-cycle stocktake of compliance with the PSED, and published online as a year end report as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

Corporate Equality Objectives Action Plans are required to be published by local authorities at a minimum of four yearly intervals. Our Cabinet endorsed the 2016/2020 Action Plan at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

We have set out actions across the following three areas:

- publish equality and diversity information more visibly;
- collect and analyse equality and diversity data more proactively;
- work more jointly with partner organisations on equality-related issues.

Placing continued emphasis upon such actions is helping us to meet our general equality duty under the PSED.

### **b.) National context 2016/2017: key protected characteristic of sexual orientation**

It is 50 years since the partial decriminalisation of homosexual sex in England and Wales, via the Sexual Offences Act 1967, which received Royal Assent on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1967. The following is a direct extract from a BBC Online research article, providing national information about the impact of the Act and changes in society attitudes.

#### **1. Social approval of same-sex relationships has risen rapidly**

The proportion of the British public who say they approve of same-sex partnerships has soared over the past 30 years. Since 1983, the British Social Attitudes survey has asked people whether they think sexual relationships between two adults of the same sex are "always wrong, mostly wrong, sometimes wrong, rarely wrong or not wrong at all".

The group of people answering that they thought same-sex partnerships were "not wrong at all" has almost quadrupled from 17% when the survey started in 1983, to 64% in 2016.

Approval fell in the 1980s when the Aids crisis and the introduction of Section 28 - a law prohibiting the promotion or teaching of homosexuality in schools - could have swayed public opinion according to NatCen, the think tank which runs the survey. But a steady and rapid rise from the early 1990s reflects a wider trend of social liberalisation, something also seen in changing attitudes to pre-marital sex.

Approval of pre-marital sex grew initially among the young - as they got older they retained that belief, and soon both old and young were more liberal on the issue.

For same-sex relationships the shift in attitude has been quicker - not only did young people with liberal views get older, but older people changed their minds, too. This might in part be because changes in the law, such as the legalisation of civil partnerships and then gay marriage, have a powerful influence on people's views, a NatCen spokesman suggests.

## **2. 1967 was not the end of the story**

While the 1967 act was a milestone in equality, it was far from the end of the story - and it chiefly benefited men who had sex with men. There have been a number of other key dates on the journey towards sexual and gender equality, not just for gay men but for the rest of the LGBT community. For example, gay sex remained illegal in Scotland and Northern Ireland until 1982 while transgender people weren't protected in equality legislation until 2010.

### ***Fifty years of legislation: timeline***

- 1967:** Sex between two men over 21 and "in private" is decriminalised
- 1980:** Decriminalisation in Scotland
- 1982:** Decriminalisation in Northern Ireland
- 1994:** The age of consent for two male partners is lowered to 18
- 2000:** The ban on gay and bisexual people serving in the armed forces is lifted; the age of consent is equalised for same- and opposite-sex partners at 16
- 2002:** Same-sex couples are given equal rights when it comes to adoption
- 2003:** Gross indecency is removed as an offence
- 2004:** A law allowing civil partnerships is passed
- 2007:** Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is banned
- 2010:** Gender reassignment is added as a protected characteristic in equality legislation
- 2014:** Gay marriage becomes legal in England, Wales and Scotland

## **3. Criminalisation of gay people continued into this century**

In 1967, homosexuality was only partially decriminalised. Those keen to criminalise any public displays of consensual homosexual activity still had tools to do so through the offence of "gross indecency", which had a broad interpretation.



Prosecutions for relationships between two consenting men over the age of 16 continued until 2000 when the age of consent was equalised. In the years following the 1967 law change, even public displays of affection could be criminalised as "procuring" or "soliciting".

Gross indecency covered activities ranging from having sex in public, to sexual activity in private involving more than two men. Hotels were counted as public and so men could be prosecuted for meeting there while others were convicted as recently as 1998 for having group sex in private.

After the 1967 Act, activities that had not been decriminalised were prosecuted far more strictly than before, according to human-rights barrister Alex Bailin QC. This led to a steep rise in offences of gross indecency. After a decline there was another spike in the 1980s amid a moral panic over the Aids epidemic.

Sexual activity in a public toilet remains a specific offence to this day - for opposite-sex couples as well. Prosecutions were far more common until the 1990s but have tailed off since, partly because of social attitudes to gay relationships, says Kate Gould, a solicitor at Bindmans.

#### **4. Government has attempted to redress this legacy**

Given this legacy of criminalisation, the Government introduced a scheme in October 2012 allowing those prosecuted under defunct gay-sex-related laws, to have their convictions removed from police and court records.

#### ***Criminalisation of gay men: convictions from 1950s-2000***

##### ***50,000 gay sex-related convictions***

- 16,000 still living in 2012
- 242 people applied to have their records wiped
- 83 applications granted between 2012 and 2016

*[Source: Home Office]*

The Home Office estimates that there were about 50,000 such offences recorded on the system from the 1950s until 2000. But of these 50,000, only an estimated 16,000 are for people who are still living and so able to apply.

Not all of the 16,000 offences are eligible to be "disregarded". They include some where the activity was non-consensual, with a person under 16 years of age, or involving other activity which would still be a crime today - for example having sex in a public toilet.

Between October 2012 and April 2016, only 242 people applied for a disregard and only 83 were granted, according to a written answer in parliament. The law changed further in 2016. Family members can now apply for posthumous pardons.

[Editor's note: in Scotland, the situation is different. On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017, Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister made a public apology on behalf of the Scottish Government to gay men convicted of sexual offences that are no longer illegal.

The first minister's apology coincided with new legislation that will automatically pardon gay and bisexual men convicted under historical laws. The bill will also allow the removal of such convictions from criminal records.

Consensual homosexual acts between men aged over 21 in Scotland were only decriminalised in 1981. And it was not until 20 years later that the age of consent for gay men was lowered to 16 years of age.]

## **5. Recording of homophobic hate crimes has risen**

A steep rise in homophobic hate crimes has been recorded over the past five years, but this is thought to be in large part down to an increase in people reporting incidents rather than a genuine rise in crime.

The National Police Chiefs Council's lead on homophobic crimes, Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton, says: *"Traditionally, homophobic hate crime has been significantly under-reported and we do not believe that current statistics accurately reflect actual levels of abuse. However, higher reporting rates indicate that the LGBT community feels increasingly confident to come forward and report incidents."*

The Home Office's report on the latest figures says that "these could be genuine increases in hate crimes or increases in the numbers of victims coming forward to report a hate crime".

## **6. Young people are more likely to identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual**

Public opinion has shifted hugely on same-sex relationships over the past decade. It's striking that people aged 16-24 are more than five times more likely than those aged over 65 to identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

The Office for National Statistics keeps records of people who identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual - 1.7% of the adult population (2% of men and 1.5% of women). This is likely to underestimate the real numbers as the survey doesn't capture sexual attraction or behaviour.

In 2005 the government tried to estimate the size of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population and came up with a larger number - 5-7% of the population.

## **7. Gay people say they feel less happy than their straight peers**

People who identify as gay, lesbian and bisexual report lower levels of well-being than heterosexuals in the UK.

The ONS looks at happiness, life satisfaction, and the extent to which people feel their life is worthwhile. For all three of those categories, gay, lesbian and bisexual people report much lower levels.

Data is also collected on anxiety, which has the biggest sexuality gap. Gay and lesbian people report higher levels of anxiety than straight people, but bisexual people are even more likely to suffer from the condition.

Young lesbian, gay and bisexual people are also more likely to suffer from suicidal thoughts than their straight friends, according to a 2014 survey by LGBT support charity Metro. The results also suggested higher rates of self-harm.

## **8. Same-sex couples have gained equal marriage rights**

Civil partnerships were legalised in 2004 throughout the United Kingdom, with the first ceremonies taking place at the end of the following year.

Nearly 140,000 people entered into civil partnerships between 2005 and 2015, the last year for which figures are available.

### ***Civil partnerships and marriages: timeline***

**2005:** first civil partnership took place

**2014:** first same-sex marriage took place

- 140,000 people entered into civil partnerships in the UK between 2005 and 2015
- 60,000 people were in same-sex marriages in 2016

*[Source: ONS]*

Across the UK, gay and lesbian couples were granted many of the same rights as married heterosexuals, albeit with a few differences around issues like private-sector pensions. It meant that couples could no longer be kept out of hospital rooms when their partner was sick, they would no longer lose their home or business because of tax laws, and they had parental rights over children.

Same-sex marriage was legalised a decade later, with the first ceremonies taking place in England, Wales and Scotland in 2014. It is still banned in Northern Ireland. According to official estimates about 60,000 people were in same-sex marriages in 2016.

## **9. Gay marriage is now legal in 22 countries**

England, Scotland and Wales were far from the first places to legalise same-sex marriage. The Netherlands changed the law first in 2001.

Gay marriage is now legal in 22 countries worldwide, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA). That's just 11% of UN member states. Definitions can sometimes be tricky though - the UK is included despite Northern Ireland's ban. Brazil and Mexico are also on ILGA's list because "through one legal route or another, it appears to be possible to marry in most jurisdictions".

## ***Countries where gay marriage is legal***

**2001:** Netherlands

**2003:** Belgium

**2005:** Canada; Spain

**2006:** South Africa

**2009:** Norway; Sweden

**2010:** Argentina; Iceland; Portugal

**2012:** Denmark

**2013:** Brazil; France; New Zealand; Uruguay

**2014:** UK (excluding Northern Ireland)

**2015:** Ireland; Luxembourg; Mexico; USA

**2016:** Colombia

**2017:** Finland; Germany

A further 28 countries guarantee some civil-partnership recognition according to ILGA.

## **10. Being gay is still criminalised in many parts of the world**

Britain is marking 50 years since the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality but same-sex relations are still illegal across vast swathes of the world.

There are 72 countries which explicitly outlaw homosexuality, according to ILGA, but there are several others with some form of legal restriction. For example, Russia is included even though same-sex relationships were formally legalised in 1993. This is because "a variety of repressive legal provisions" have come into force over the past decade, according to ILGA.

In eight countries same-sex relationships sometimes carry the death penalty - Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, and parts of Iraq and Syria held by so-called Islamic State. The number of states that criminalise same-sex relations is decreasing annually, though, with Belize and the Seychelles repealing such laws last year.

### **c.) Local context 2016/2017: round up of corporate activity**

Progress may usefully be demonstrated via the following case studies, taking the three key strategic strands of our work and linking them to Protected Characteristics.

## **Key strategic strand: publish more visibly**

### ***Background***

At an organisational level, the majority of the equality and diversity information that the Council holds relating to service users is collected and monitored within service areas. Service areas are asked to use an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) approach, to help to identify whether or not any new or significant planned or anticipated changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities.

An increased use of Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments is helping to ensure that equality data is being collected on an ongoing basis and considered when service changes are planned, and that there is ongoing engagement with people in Protected Characteristic groupings and people at risk of social exclusion. This includes those living in rural households, who may for example be at such a risk due to lack of access to services.

The ESIIAs are published online in the dedicated area of our website about equality, diversity and social inclusion, as well as being integral to committee reports to Cabinet as a very visible record of service area and corporate efforts in this regard.

The Council also seeks out good practice in the field of equality and diversity policy from public sector bodies, such as NHS Foundation Trusts, and from other local authorities. For the latter, we look in particular at those who share commonalities of challenges with us, or commonality of borders and therefore communities. Examples include Cornwall and Cumbria as rural authorities, and Cheshire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Worcestershire as our neighbours.

### ***Case Study: other approaches to Equality Impact Assessments***

A piece of desktop research was carried out in order to identify if or how other local authorities carried out economic impact assessments as well as equality impact assessments, and how this was published on their websites. This reviewed online material at other rural county authorities and urban authorities, and LGA resources.

The findings indicated variability in terms of approaches to impact assessments across other local authorities. It was a relatively small sample size, and could as readily be widened in order to obtain more evidence. Economic impact assessments by Councils appear to fall into three groupings as regards formal record on Cabinet papers. None in the research undertaken to date so far involved recording of an entirely separate economic impact assessment.

The **main route** taken in terms of proportionality and opportunity to enable consistency of approach across service areas appears to be to adapt their equality impact assessment (EIA).

All Councils are required to undertake equality impact assessments, but have flexibility in determining how they do so: hence our current approach of including social inclusion so that we can record likely impacts for low income households, rural households, vulnerable people etc.

A **second route** is to feature a paragraph in a committee report saying how a policy or strategy or service change will help to meet Council objectives, which is what Cumbria has for example done in tandem with its EIA, and what Newcastle City Council does as part of an holistic checklist assessment approach. This then enables explicit reference to economic impact.

A **third route** taken does not explicitly reference economic impact, but it may be implicit. An example of this is Wolverhampton City Council.

***Route one: recorded as considered as part of a comprehensive or integrated impact assessment approach***

**Devon County Council:** integrated impact assessment, including templates and guidance notes

**Cornwall Council:** comprehensive impact assessment, including an implications section that is bespoke to the topic but will include equality and diversity, safeguarding, and information management

**Staffordshire County Council:** community impact assessment including checklist and executive summary

***Cornwall approach example: report to Cabinet on delivery of the Local Plan and Strategic Economic Plan***

*Section: Implications.*

*Featured: legal/governance; financial; risk; equality and diversity; safeguarding; information management; community safety, crime and disorder; health, safety and wellbeing; other eg business continuity planning*

***Route two: recorded as considered under an assessment of how the policy or strategy will meet corporate objectives***

**Cumbria County Council:** assessment against corporate objectives in tandem with health and equality assessment

**Newcastle City Council:** assessment using a checklist of questions to demonstrate holistic approach. No explicit reference to an EIA. The Council previously used integrated impact assessments.

***Cumbria approach example: report to Cabinet to seek approval for membership of Transport for the North***

*Section: Council Plan Priority – How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council’s stated objectives?*

*Section: What is the Impact of the Decision on Health Inequalities and Equality and Diversity Issues?*

## **Newcastle City Council approach example: report to Cabinet about Housing Delivery Plan and Land Asset Plan**

*Section: Why is the proposal being put forward?*

*Section: What impact will the proposals have?*

*Section: How will success be measured?*

*Section: What is the timetable for implementation?*

*Section: What are the legal implications*

*Section: What are the resource implications*

*Section: What are the procurement implications*

*Section: What are the key risks*

### **Route three: approaches where economic assessment may be implicit**

**Luton Borough Council:** health and wellbeing assessments

**Essex County Council:** Social Value Toolkit

**Wolverhampton City Council:** assessment of equalities, environmental, Human Resources, and corporate landlord implications, alongside legal and financial

**Worcestershire County Council:** assessment in three areas: legal, financial and HR; privacy and public health; equality and diversity

### **Key strategic strand: collect and analyse more proactively**

#### **Background**

The Council collects and uses equality and diversity data as part of a range of partnership and corporate approaches towards meeting the needs of service users. These approaches involve consultation and engagement with:

- current and potential service users;
- communities and neighbourhoods;
- those who represent communities, such as from the voluntary and community sector, and town and parish councils, alongside Shropshire Council councilors and MPs;
- those who work across regional boundaries to provide services, such as utilities companies, infrastructure providers, and health care providers;
- those who work within sectors to provide more local services and facilities including sport and leisure and outdoor and environmental activities
- those who work within education and further and higher education and workforce skills sector, to improve access to learning and skills
- local and regional businesses and stakeholders such as housing developers, social care providers, and strategic partnerships including the Marches LEP and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

#### **Case study: records on sex orientation**

One of the key services of the Council is that of the Registrars' Office, and it is here that differences over time in how our communities are evolving and how society attitudes are changing can usefully be ascertained.

This includes not only where people are choosing to live and to give birth, but also where and how they are choosing to get married.

The service registers all births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, and still births occurring in the Shropshire Council Area. Services are provided from 11 different locations across the County in nine towns: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Ludlow, Wem, Bishops Castle, and Church Stretton.

The service, working in partnership with SATH, provide death registration facilities, 3 days per week and more recently have reinstated a birth registration service for 2 days per week on site at RSH. The main maternity unit is now based at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford. The responsibility for the registration of these births now rests with Telford & Wrekin’s Registration Service.

Members of the public can come to register a life event at ten of these locations. The eleventh location is the central register repository, where all of the completed births, deaths and marriage registers containing events which have happened in Shropshire since 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837 are kept and where historical certificates are produced, and to where there is no public access.

In line with efforts to publish more visibly what we know about access to our services by people in terms of their disclosed sex orientation, we take a look here at changes in numbers of civil partnership ceremonies conducted in the county over the time period since civil partnerships were introduced in December 2005, and numbers of same sex marriages and conversions of civil partnerships to marriages.

As may be seen, this mirrors changes at national level.

***Civil partnerships and marriages: local timeline***

- Same Sex Couples were able to marry from **13<sup>th</sup> March 2014**
- Conversions of Civil Partnerships to Marriage were introduced from **10<sup>th</sup> December 2014**
- Civil Partnerships were introduced on **5<sup>th</sup> December 2005**

	2006	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (to 1/12/17)
Civil Partnerships:	62	27	10	6	3	6
Same Sex Marriage			23	35	43	43 ytd
CP Conversion to Marriage				20	5	7 ytd

This data is one of the few ways we have at present of getting a more than anecdotal feel for the extent of the LGBT community in Shropshire.



Another way we utilise is to ask our staff, which is then recorded in the complementary workforce diversity report. It is pleasing to be able to report that the numbers who are happy to disclose their sex orientation has increased since last year.

It remains a challenge to find out more about this Protected Characteristic grouping, and in so doing to be better placed to identify and seek to meet their needs.

### **Key strategic strand: work more jointly**

#### **Background**

Partnership approaches encompass liaison work through and with the local voluntary and community sector, particularly through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) and its forums of interest. Faith communities, and the South Shropshire Inter Faith Forum and Shrewsbury Inter faith Forum, are represented on the VCSA and active in seeking to bring diverse groups together and foster mutual understanding and respect. This very much chimes with the national equality aim to foster good relations.

#### **Case study: Annual Holocaust Memorial Day 27<sup>th</sup> January**

A specific action area linked to the Protected Characteristics of Religion and Belief, and Race, focusses upon partnership work to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, which is held every year on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, with a national theme identified each year. This is also described in some detail on the Council's website, with pictures and associated media coverage.

The 2018 theme is "The power of words". This lends itself particularly appropriately to what Shropshire Council is doing, as the focus is upon work with local primary schools and with inter faith forums to plant a cherry tree each year, in different parts of this very large county, so that over time there will be a cherry tree orchard of remembrance across Shropshire.

The orchard had a growth spurt in 2017, when we were also able to provide for five secondary schools to have trees as well.

Children from Bishop Hooper CofE Primary School in Ashford Carbonell, down in the far south of the county, commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 in a special cherry tree planting ceremony involving the whole school.

The 2017 theme was "How can life go on?". Local Shropshire Councillor Vivienne Parry helped four of the children to plant the tree, and talked about caring for trees and nature and for each other, whilst Mark Michaels from the Jewish community talked about Jewish child refugees arriving in England on the Kindertransport, and Syrian families being welcomed to Shropshire in the present day. The local vicar said a special Shropshire prayer at the end of the ceremony, which concluded an entire school day of cherry tree ceremonies across Shropshire, involving primary and secondary schools, members of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, and local Shropshire Councillors.

Mr Michaels, together with Imam Sohayb Peerbhai from the Muslim community, started off the morning of Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 at Woodside Academy in Oswestry, where three local children talked about how the tree they had planted last year was growing, and how they helped to look after it. They then journeyed to Mereside CofE primary school in Shrewsbury, to help light a candle with children there, and see how the tree they planted in 2015 was growing, before the final visit of the day to Bishop Hooper School in the afternoon.

Four cherry trees were also planted in ceremonies on the same day with secondary schools, all sourced by Shropshire Council through the Incredible Edible project for fruit trees that will contribute to a sustainable natural environment. The trees were planted at the Corbet in Baschurch; at the Belvidere and Priory schools in Shrewsbury; and at the Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Services base in Sundorne, also in Shrewsbury. A further tree was planted by Church Stretton School on Monday 30 January, linked to activities supported by the South Shropshire Interfaith Forum, and a visit by a Holocaust survivor

Having begun in the centre in 2015, with Mereside CofE School, we are now back in the central area again for 2018.

We have identified Trinity CofE School in Ford as being the primary school to represent the centre and west of the county in 2018, through the planting of a memorial cherry tree and the conducting of a short inter faith ceremony, including the lighting of a commemorative candle.

We are going to hold the tree planting ceremony on the morning of Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January, following one to the east of the town with Mereside, where we will be measuring how theirs has grown. This should lead to positive publicity for what has become a very moving and fitting way to commemorate the Holocaust and other genocides. More importantly, it is a chance to continue to involve the children of Mereside in the Day, and help to make it real for the children at the 2018 school in a way that will be age appropriate.

We are talking additionally with Woodside and Bishop Hooper schools about supporting them in ceremonies as well, and are supporting the secondary schools with resources.

Shropshire Council councillors will be involved at all the events in their community leadership roles, and there will be associated media coverage. The regional HMD Trust officer is going to come to the events as well, which will then feed into national coverage.

There will also be a display in the foyer at Shirehall in the week leading up to the day and into the following week, where the plan is to have pictures of all eight trees planted to date, stories of how the schools are looking after them, and further related materials including reflections by the children.

#### **d.) National context 2017/2018: key protected characteristic of gender**

2017 has seen the introduction of the Gender Pay Gap regulations which require organisations of over 250 employees to publish their Gender Pay Gap each financial year. Shropshire Council will publish their Gender Pay Gap on the Council's Equality Pages by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018, which is the publication deadline for public sector organisations.

Shropshire Council's gender split within the workforce corporately has always fallen at around 80-20 split with the majority of our staff being female. With the inclusion of schools staff the gap widens with the even lower percentage of Male employees within the Schools environment. This is largely down to the types of roles that the organisation holds which are historically and predominantly female orientated, such as care roles, cleaning and catering roles as well as a large proportion of part time positions and in addition within Schools the role of Teaching Assistant and other Support type roles are predominantly filled by females.

Shropshire Council promotes gender equality. Our flexible working policy enables employees to request flexible working whether that be in terms of working hours or locations such as working remotely so that employees can achieve a work life balance. Flexible working can be requested by all employees except agency workers and school based employees. Both Males and Females can request to work flexibly.

Homeworking forms part of our flexible working policy enabling employees to request to work from home on either a permanent or ad-hoc basis. In addition, annualised hours make it easier for our employees to work on a more flexible basis where service needs allow.

All posts within Shropshire Council undergo a Job Evaluation process to mitigate against any equal pay issues within the organisation.

#### **e.) Local context 2017/2018: corporate actions planned**

##### **Key strategic strand: publish more visibly**

Equalities information on the Council website and on the intranet will continue to be kept under review, to aid a range of audiences to see a range of up to date materials. The information currently features evidence about service user and workforce diversity, guidance for service areas assessing equality impacts and seeking to rural proof their services, and links to related information for communities, such as support for those wishing to report hate crimes.

The Rurality and Equalities Specialist is researching ways to help people who are in Protected Characteristics groupings to get to the support and advice that they are seeking on a personal level, via access from the Equalities pages to the helpline and advice line information already included in the Community Information Directory pages. This is in liaison with the Feedback and Customer Insight Team Leader.

The Council's intelligence sources, national data, and the efforts of exemplar authorities, clearly demonstrate that there can be challenges in finding out more about the needs of individuals in communities. Creating opportunities to identify and collect service user equalities data, in ways that respect confidentiality whilst helping to produce robust information and quality intelligence, will assist in targeting available resources. It will also help in seeking a fair and equitable share of central government funding, and accessing other funding, e.g. existing EU funding for social inclusion, which is a strategic activity through the LEP, and eg any other funding streams post-Brexit.

The Council therefore very much welcomes any data that people in Shropshire may feel able to share, and will observe confidentiality and anonymity in so doing. We continue to target our local efforts at finding out where there are gaps in equality and diversity data, and in finding out where there may be barriers to accessing particular services, for people with one or more of the Protected Characteristics and for people who are at risk of social exclusion.

### **Key strategic strand: collect and analyse more proactively**

#### ***Equality data about the local workforce***

Shropshire Council still has some work to do in terms of reducing the percentage of employees for which we have no equality data. As an Authority we still need to encourage employees to declare equality information so we have a more accurate view of the diversity of the workforce to enable us draw on the different talents, experiences and perspectives of our employees from different backgrounds and cultures.

The introduction of a new ERP system in the next 12 months provides opportunity to make improvements to data accuracy and data collection to then migrate information into the new system. As part of the migration we can begin to hold more up to date and accurate data about our employees.

By understanding our workforce and the diversity within it, we can work to ensure that our staff are happy and feel valued whatever their background.

### **Key strategic strand: work more jointly**

#### ***Equality data about local service users***

One of the service areas where there is potential to work more jointly and build upon links already made with partner organisations in order to strengthen consistency in equality data collection is that of Adult Social Care.

Under new NHS England guidance issued on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017, health professionals in England are to be told to ask patients aged 16 or over about their sexual orientation. The guidance applies to doctors and nurses, as well as local councils responsible for adult social care.

NHS England recommends health professionals - such as GPs and nurses - ask about a person's sexual orientation at "every face to face contact with the patient, where no record of this data already exists".

NHS England said the data was already being collected in many areas but that the new guidance makes it standard, and that it expects sexual orientation monitoring to be in place across England by April 2019.

This requirement is already built into Liquid Logic, the replacement Social Care system, under 'demographics', as part of the Council's Digital Transformation programme.

Under the guidance, health professionals are to ask patients: "Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?" The options include heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual, other sexual orientation, not sure, not stated and not known. If a patient does not want to disclose their sexuality, "not stated" would be recorded as their response. The guidance also says patients who are not able to declare their sexual orientation, for example if they require specialist mental capacity care, would be recorded as "not known".

Manchester's LGBT Foundation worked with NHS England and others to develop the sexual orientation monitoring. The Council will be looking in particular therefore at how the Greater Manchester Combined Authority now approaches the collection of the data, as well as any joint approaches with neighbouring authorities and health and social care organisations who provide care services across our borders.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Council uses a wide range of customer feedback mechanisms and information exchange mechanisms, including social media, to facilitate open feedback from a range of audiences and stakeholders. The views, issues and learning from people living and working in Shropshire are welcomed and encouraged via this ongoing engagement basis as well as through specific consultation exercises.

We also continue to build on our knowledge to help influence service area policy, in order to take actions that will enhance the likely positive impact or mitigate against the likely negative impact of policy on any of the groupings in our community, with increasing use being made of our Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) templates and Diversity Monitoring Charts to help us.

**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)*

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
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.

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
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 <b>(additional grouping in Shropshire)</b>	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

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

**Table two: this is a table to show the ten groupings in Shropshire, along with examples of information sources for service areas.**

<b>Protected Characteristic and other groups in Shropshire</b>	<b>Examples of information sources for service areas</b>
<b>Age</b> (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)	Adult social care data; Blue Badge records; Census 2011 profiles; children's centre data; concessionary fare records; housing services data; schools data; leisure facilities usage
<b>Disability</b> (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)	Adult social care data; Blue Badge records; Census 2011 profiles; concessionary fare records; housing services data; schools data; leisure facilities usage
<b>Gender re-assignment</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)	Customer complaints and comments data; national proxy data
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)	Housing services data; Registrar records
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)	Housing services data; Registrar records
<b>Race</b> (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)	Adult social care data; Census 2011 profiles; children's centre data; concessionary fare records; housing services data; schools data; leisure facilities usage
<b>Religion and belief</b> (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)	Adult social care data; Census 2011 profile; Housing services data; Registrar records
<b>Sex</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)	Adult social care data; Blue Badge records; Census 2011 profiles; children's centre data; concessionary fare records; schools data; leisure facilities usage
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)	Customer complaints and comments data; drug and alcohol service customer records; national proxy data
<b>Other: Social Inclusion</b> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)	Adoption and fostering data; Adult social care data; benefits customer data; children's centre data; housing services data; leisure facilities usage; planning policy records eg Place Plans