

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
2022 – 2024

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Foreword

We are very pleased to introduce City of Wolverhampton Council's new Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy which sets out our commitment for advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in our City over the next three years.

We're determined to make Wolverhampton fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, can reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life. This deeply held vision is at the very core of how we work and we're relentless in our determination to reduce inequality and improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

We're an incredibly diverse borough that pulls together and proudly celebrates our differences – but we know that many residents still face disadvantage and discrimination.

Everyone who lives or works in Wolverhampton is valued for the unique contribution they make to our borough and we won't rest until everyone can achieve their potential and live their lives free of discrimination.

The strategy therefore aims to guide us in our understanding of the different community needs, enable us to act to tackle inequality, discrimination and disparities where they exist and look to strengthen good relations between our different local communities to bring better outcomes for the people we serve. We will remain fully committed to achieving continuous improvement and equality across all our services and functions.

As part of this process our Corporate EDI Strategy aims to ensure we maintain our Excellent status and further embed equality, diversity and inclusion.

Finally, we would like to express our support for and commitment to the strategy and look to forward to seeing positive outcomes and benefits emerge from its implementation.



Leader

Councillor Ian Brookfield



Chief Executive

Tim Johnson

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Plan On A Page

Context – Drivers for Strategy

Diverse City made up of 249,470 citizens.

Legislative requirements; Equality Act 2010 .
Our moral duty and social responsibility.

In October 2018 awarded Excellence in LGA Equality Framework for Local Government.

Renewed focus and commitment since George Floyd / Black Lives Matter / Release of Disparity Reports / COVID-19. 26th June 2020 Meeting with Chief Executive Officer.

Embedded Equalities into Council Plan and Relighting our City Plan

Message from our Leader and Chief Executive

We're an incredibly diverse City that pulls together and proudly celebrates our differences – but we know that many residents still face disadvantage and discrimination. Everyone who lives or works in Wolverhampton is valued for the unique contribution they make to our City and we won't rest until everyone can achieve their potential and live their lives free of discrimination. We will ensure that no matter how difficult the challenges become, we will protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure that 'no-one' is left behind.

Objectives – What do we aim to achieve?

Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standard we expect of ourselves.

To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve.

To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development.

To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion .



Leader of the Council

Councillor Ian Brookfield



Chief Executive

Tim Johnson

Our Vision

To be a fairer, inclusive and a more equal City – where no-one is left behind. To achieve our vision, we will lead by example, work with our partners, invest in our communities, develop and empower our workforce- and listen and act when our communities and our employees tell us how we can do better .

Priorities – Key Issues we want to tackle (You Said; We Are Doing)

Visible Leadership & strong Organisational Culture

Improve and Foster our understanding of our communities and employees.
Continue to work closely with the business, employees, community and voluntary sector to ensure that discrimination is eliminated.
Develop an organisational culture where everyone is valued, respected and treated fairly.

Inclusive Employer where its workforce is reflective of the City

Push hard to employ staff that reflect the boroughs diversity.
Improve the diversity of the workforce at senior levels – key action is to set aspirational targets and agree vision for 2030.
Close the 'pay gap' on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGBT.

Targeted professional Training & Development

Take action that supports career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds.
Actively promote staff development opportunities targeting under-representative groups.

Inclusive, Responsive and Accessible Services

Understand the barriers to equality, experienced in Wolverhampton and act to remove them.
Bridging the gap between the levels of deprivation and prosperity in the borough.
Provide more accessible, responsive and inclusive services.

Our Values

Put people first

Raise the city's profile & reputation

Inspire trust & confidence

Deliver together

Empower people to innovate

Measurables (work in progress)

Consultation with our employee's, councillors and citizens (staff and resident survey results – parity in service satisfaction and engagement)

Monitoring the data that we hold both for our staff and our customers; make use of the data to determine service satisfaction and change.

Directorate Equality Plans to define measurables (In Progress)

Directorate Equality Plans

Regeneration

Adult Social Care

Children and Young People

Governance

Strategy

Communication

Finance

City Assets

City Environment

Public Health

Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, when planning, delivering and monitoring our services - for our citizens.

1. Context and legislation

The Equality, diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out the council's four key priority areas for action in one document and outlines how we will embed equalities considerations into our day-to-day business.

Under the Equality Act 2010 Wolverhampton has a Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that in exercising our functions and delivering services and partnership work we:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share a protected characteristic
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Act also introduced nine 'Protected Characteristics'.

age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

In addition to these 'general' duties, there are also 'specific' duties – requiring us to prepare and publish equality information annually and equality objectives every four years.

We acknowledge that the Council has a key role to play to promote a fair and more equal society by putting equalities considerations central to the decisions we make about service delivery, contract arrangements and employment.

In producing this strategy, we have developed the four key priority areas that will promote greater equality and promote community cohesion in Wolverhampton by addressing issues of concern in the borough.

The Equality Act underpins the strategy and the priority areas for action and apply to all the protected characteristics.

2. Introduction – Wolverhampton’s population.

We are proud of our people and the contributions our diverse communities make

Our city is diverse and cohesive with a total population standing at 260,00 residents.

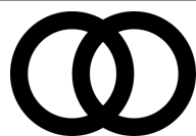
- One third (36%) of our population is from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups
- 19% of our residents were born outside the UK.
- There are around 90 languages spoken within the city.
- The most-followed religion in the city is Christianity (56%), and the second-most followed is Sikhism (9%). However, over a quarter of residents (26%) have disclosed having no religion.
- In the city there are 51,258 people who have disclosed having limitations in their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, which equates to 21% of the city's population. Higher rates are observed amongst females, people aged 50-64 and people aged 65+.
- Interestingly data sourced from the last census provides information on the marital status of our residents, showing that 43% of all residents aged over 16 were either married or in a civil partnership.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS). estimated that 2.8% of adults identified themselves as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual. Applying this estimate directly to Wolverhampton's most recent Mid-Year Population Estimate, this equates to 5,787 LGB residents.
- ONS have not produced local data on gender re-assignment for Wolverhampton. This will be a question in the 2021 census. A link to ONS's work in this areas is [here](#) Govt Equalities Office figures for the UK estimate that 0.007% is Trans. This would give a Wolverhampton estimate of 18 people.

Wolverhampton’s diversity is the fabric which holds our city together and our people are proud of our friendly and supportive communities. Already home to over a quarter of a million people, we expect our population to rise as more people and new communities choose to live in the City of Wolverhampton.

Our city is home to a thriving voluntary and community sector with individuals and groups dedicating their time to improve their communities. We value the contribution of the sector and recognise the critical role it plays in delivering the city's priorities. The sector generates over £140 million with over 12,000 volunteers.



37 is the average **age** of the population.



43% of residents are **married**.

0.2% of residents are in a **same-sex civil partnership**.



35% of residents are from a **BAME** background.

Total Population – 245,426



11% do not speak English as a first language.

0.007% of the UK population has a **gender reassignment** certificate.

This equates to



18

residents within Wolverhampton.

74% of residents have a **religion**



56%
Christian



9 %
Sikh



4%
Muslim



4%
Hindu

2.8% of the population according to the ONS Survey which equates to



5787

residents as defining as **LGB** or other.

6th highest **birth rate** in the West Midlands.



3257 Births
in 2019

51%

of residents define as **female**.



21% of residents have a **disability**.



61% of **65+** have a disability compared to **10%** of **16-49**.

3. Our successes and our Journey so far

Over the past three years progress has been made towards embedding equality practice throughout the Council and promoting community cohesion.

Outlined below are some of our successes:

- Listening to the views of diverse communities through our membership of city-wide partnerships and engagement activities
CWC has good relationships with partners which ensure that equality issues are raised and shared, resulting in better outcomes for the people of Wolverhampton. Many examples of excellent joint working with key partners include:
 - The Health and Wellbeing board which is making a difference to the prioritisation of health inequalities in Wolverhampton.
 - Head start - a project with partners to improve young people's mental health
 - Tackling Hate Crime – The Safer Wolverhampton Partnership has identified and established 18 hate crime reporting centres in Wolverhampton. West Midlands Police support the centres by delivering hate crime training to key staff at the centres.
 - WEDP- Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership continue to play a key role during the pandemic, supporting the council to reach out to vulnerable groups, distributing information on latest government guidelines on how to stay safe and access support.
 - The Council's initiatives that impacted beyond the local authority area has been the Paulette Wilson Windrush Project. The project was named after the late Paulette Wilson a Wolverhampton resident. The Windrush Project was developed to support the human rights of individuals from the Commonwealth who were in danger of being wrongfully deported and then broadened to all those at risk. CWC provided funding to the city's Refugee and Migrant Centre in April 2018, to assist and support those who came from the Commonwealth prior to 1973.
 - Working with the British Deaf Association to provide accessible services to D/deaf people.
- Retaining our commitment to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to inform service and budget changes
- Inviting external and independent assessment of our work by taking part in equality charters such as the, Stonewall and the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government
- Introducing a culture change programme to enhance managers' leadership skills, to model and demonstrate our corporate culture, values and equality principles continues to help us deliver improved services across the city
- Improving the collection and analysis of our workforce and recruitment data has given us a better understanding of the issues affecting our workforce so that we can focus our work in those areas that are key to delivering improved, tangible equality outcomes for our staff
- Mainstreaming equality and inclusion principles into our Corporate, Directorate and Service plans
- Development of the "WV Insight" website continues to provide staff and the public access to information and data sets). The data is aligned to the Equality Framework for Local Government. It enables users to drill down to consider trends and compare CWC to its near neighbour councils and conduct gap analyses on equality criteria.

- The Council continues to use data to inform its services and target initiatives, these include Rough Sleepers Initiative, the Managed Offender Pilot and "Wolves at Work" is another example of a service that uses data to identify and target key groups.
- Strong commitment from councillors, senior executive board (SEB) and senior managers to equality and diversity. Equality and diversity is firmly on the agenda for all Strategic SEB, leadership and operational managers meetings. Representatives from the Staff Equality Forums attend strategic SEB meetings and have appointed SEB sponsors to each staff equality forum to listen to views.
- Strong organisational structure in place to ensure EDI remains integral in everything we do. Corporate Equality Steering Group (CESG) is chaired by the Director of Governance, with membership from each of the directorates and the chairs of the Staff Equality Forums. There are clear plans to support the delivery of equality and diversity, each service produces an annual service equality plan and performance on each service equality plan is reported through the relevant governance processes. Progress reports on all equality action plans are presented to the Members Equality Advisory Group, Strategic SEB and shared with the cabinet portfolio holder for governance. There is also a dedicated equality team whose work is valued by the organisation and further investment made to expand the team.
- Improving the diversity of elected members - we continue to host activities targeted at ethnic minority groups, disabled people, our LGBT+ community and women – this includes the "Be a Councillor" event.
- Improving the diversity of our workforce – A range of actions have been introduced over the past two years to address lack of workforce representation at senior levels. These include having diverse selection panels in on all recruitment activity; mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff involved in selection decisions including members; requiring recruitment agencies to produce diverse shortlists; having anonymised applications for all posts; giving guaranteed interviews for all disabled applicants meeting the vacancy criteria. A Leadership Development Scheme and graduate scheme introduced encouraging/targeting BAME applications; mentoring programme; Wrap Around Support Programme and Brilliant Leaders programme – all targeted at supporting underrepresented groups.
- Providing a Safe Space for our employees, in order to raise concerns if they feel that they have been treated unfairly - Safe Space Scheme launched 18th Jan 2021.

In October 2018, the City of Wolverhampton Council was awarded the Excellence level of the LGA's Equality Framework for Local Government and our Chief Executive has continued the pace of work on equality and diversity. Feedback from our most recent assessment, the Equality Framework has been built into this strategy.

4. Our Challenges along the way

We have and continue to face many challenges which have influenced our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. The main ones have been due to responding to financial constraints, effects of deprivation, demographic change and the impact of Brexit. Most recently, since March 2020 we have been in unprecedented times responding to the Coronavirus pandemic. In May 2020, following the killing of George Floyd many Black Lives Matter protests were held across the world, including UK. However, **we will ensure that no matter how difficult the challenges become, we will protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure that 'no-one' is left behind.**

Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19) - National emerging data has found that Covid-19 does not affect all population groups equally. Public Health England (PHE) report 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19' (published in June 2020) found that the largest disparity was age, people who were 80 or over were seventy times more likely to die than those under 40. Risk of dying among those diagnosed with Covid-19 was higher in males than females; higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least affluent and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups. People of BAME communities are more likely to be at increased risk of acquiring the infection.

The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting BAME groups in the UK. BAME groups tend to have poorer socioeconomic circumstances which lead to poorer health outcomes. Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the Public Health England (PHE) analysis confirmed the strong association between economic disadvantage and COVID-19 diagnoses, incidence and severe disease. Economic disadvantage is also strongly associated with the prevalence of smoking, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, which all increase the risk of disease severity. Moreover, BAME communities are more likely to live in urban areas, overcrowded households and have jobs that expose them to higher risk.

Our Response – safeguarding our workforce: We adopted an inclusive individual approach to supporting colleagues across the workforce. Staff health, safety and wellbeing has been a top priority for us. Managers have supported their teams to adapt to different ways of working and risk assessing individual circumstances (e.g. underlying health conditions, caring responsibilities) signposting colleagues to a wealth of resources offered by HR (e.g. general wellbeing and mental health, working from home).

Our Response – safeguarding our communities: Equality of access in our communication has been a priority to ensure key messages (accessing our help line, food hub, social distancing and safeguarding information) on Covid-19 reached all of our diverse communities. We engaged with key partners through our Wolverhampton Equality & Diversity Partnerships and other boards.

Black Lives Matter - The killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the United States brought to bear the stark reality of the persistent presence and impact of racism in our global society. We recognise the distressing impact of these events on our BAME workforce and our BAME communities. We also recognise that racism affects many groups within society and within the BAME communities, in different ways. We are very proud of the diversity within our workforce and the communities we serve. We will continue to embrace and celebrate diversity – and we will continue to work hard collaboratively with our partners and employees to better understand the different ways

that our diverse population experiences life and will do all that we can to make Wolverhampton a welcoming, more inclusive and safe place for all .

The **national and international context** for the council and city is challenging. Changes to welfare and benefit systems and the costs of living and especially housing in the city are putting many people under pressure. The result of the referendum on leaving the EU raises many questions about how the city and the country will interact with the rest of the continent and the wider world. Events across the UK and the world have local consequences and impacts on individuals and communities for good or ill, affecting community cohesion and relations between people.

Having an **in-depth, current understanding of our communities**, their diversity, identities, assets and needs helps us to consider how best to design and deliver our services. We know that the city includes some of the most deprived areas in the country with significant inequalities facing certain neighbourhoods and communities of identity. This means we will have to work even harder to ensure that the right services meet diverse needs at the right times, in the right ways.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion remains a top priority for the City of Wolverhampton Council

Our ongoing Commitment

To secure the benefits of diversity, we are building an inclusive organisation that actively recognises the contribution that people from different backgrounds make to all aspects of the council's work and the city's communities. The values and behaviours set out in our Corporate plan will help us build this inclusivity.

Being truly inclusive is not just about welcoming different contributions. Inclusion also means actively tackling inequalities and advancing greater equality, as well as fostering good relations between different people. Inclusion means removing the barriers – physical, economic or social – that hold people back, so we build a city in which everyone feels a part of. Creating a successful inclusive city also means recognising that there are other causes of inequality or exclusion, often inter-connected - people can be excluded because they have low income, are socially isolated, live in poor housing or due to poor health. Refugees and migrants, those with caring responsibilities or who those have been in care are likely to face inequality or exclusion.

A key reason why many people in Wolverhampton are held back is because of 'existing inequalities' , discrimination and lack of opportunity connected to one or more of the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This strategy re-states our long-held commitment to tackling inequality on these grounds, not just because it's our legal duty but also because

doing so helps create a more successful city- it's **the right thing to do, we will continue to protect the most vulnerable and we will leave no-one behind.**

Our Vision

To be a fairer, inclusive and a more equal city – where no-one is left behind.

We will continue to work hard to.

- provide inclusive services, value and respect diversity and ensure fairness for both our employees and our communities.
- remove inequalities in the provision of services and employment.
- Listen to our people and our communities

To achieve our vision for inclusion, equality and fairness in the city, we will lead by example, work with our partners, invest in our communities, develop and empower our workforce- and listen and act when our communities and our employees tell us how we can do better.

We will take a leading role in seeking to increase equality, inclusion and fairness in our city.

Whilst the Council is starting from a very good place – having obtained excellence in equality framework for Local Government in October 2018 – details [here](#) – we know that there is a lot more to do to ensure that equalities is fully at the heart of everything we do. As a result, we have launched this new Equalities Strategy and supporting action plans that will aim to tie our work on equalities to the overall aims and objectives of the Council, as set out in the **Council Plan** and our **Relighting Our City Plan**.

The Council is firmly committed to pushing equalities forwards and making sure that it is fully embedded in every it does. The Council Plan and the Relighting Our City Plan recognises this.

As set out within the Council Plan, the six key priorities include:

- Children and young people get the best possible start in life
- Well skilled people working in an inclusive economy
- Re good jobs and investment in our city
- Better homes for all
- Strong, resilient and healthy communities

- A vibrant, green city we can all be proud of

Our Relighting Our City Plan, launched in September 2020, sets out how we will put recovery in place as a result of the impact of the Covid- 19 – “The council’s five point ‘relight’ recovery plan will:

- Support people who need us most
- Create more opportunities for young people
- Generate more jobs and learning opportunities
- Grow our vital local businesses
- Stimulate vibrant high streets and communities

Our recovery commitment was developed with the people of the City of Wolverhampton at its heart. “We have engaged with over 2,500 of residents to understand key priorities and the outcomes our residents want to see.”

This is underpinned by 3 principles – namely – climate focused, driven by digital and fair and inclusive – on the last the following is stated:

‘We will continue to tackle the inequalities in our communities which impact on the opportunities of local people. The Council’s ‘Excellent’ rated equalities framework is at the heart of our recovery commitment. No community will be left behind as we transform our city together’.

Our role as a community leader in maintaining positive community relationships

Wolverhampton has a strong history of building positive community relationships and partnerships and this strategy recognises that no one agency can tackle the inequalities in the city in isolation. By working together, much more can be achieved to make Wolverhampton a more equitable city. Collectively, we want to make sure our city enables all individuals to realise their potential to work productively and be rewarded appropriately, to feel comfortable, healthy and happy. A great city allows all its residents, people with different experiences, beliefs and perspectives the chance to make a contribution to their community, bringing a sense of achievement and belonging. We are proud that, for many, this is already the case in Wolverhampton. We want it to be so for everyone – and we will leave no one behind.

The council and its residents will continue to work closer together to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eliminated, that none of our communities are left behind or unable to access the opportunities that our city has to offer. We aspire that everyone has the same life

chances irrespective of their diversity. Our targeted approach will enable us to support communities to thrive and improve our understanding of the needs of our diverse and culturally rich city. It is vital, in such a diverse and culturally rich city.

As part of the consultation plan for this strategy, we will encourage active participation, involvement and co-production, this to ensure this strategy is shaped and informed by our people and our communities.

Our role as a service provider

The council is responsible for providing a range of services that directly affect people's everyday life. The council will tackle disadvantages by addressing the substantive issues being experienced by both the majority and minority communities in the borough- whether levels of deprivation and under- achievement, or a wider lack of opportunity.

We will work hard to ensure services delivered remain accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities we serve. We will make sure we provide an equal focus on all the protected characteristics and make services available to all. By improving the **equality monitoring information**, we collect, we can tailor services and better understand the barriers to equality.

Our role as a large employer

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. The council is also committed to recruiting the best person(s) and would therefore actively recruit and support high potential individuals regardless of their background.

We will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated equally and fairly and will ensure that no applicants are discriminated against in the recruitment and selection process. We will review the recruitment, promotion, training and development of our staff and the composition of our workforce, in line with our statutory obligations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability. We are committed to investing in our staff and will provide training to support the development of our workforce. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any kind within the council and will take prompt and effective action whenever it occurs.

We will continue to develop our workforce to ensure they have the tools necessary to provide effective services to our diverse community. We will also continue to recognise and celebrate the strengths that our diversity and inclusion brings.

6. The Corporate EDI Strategy

Our strategy sets out how we will deliver the high standards we expect of ourselves. It sets out the action we will undertake to build an inclusive culture within our workforce and organisation. It sets out how we will shape services which actively address inequality and exclusion and address the progressive building of good relations between different communities. It has also taken account of the recommendations following the LGA's Equality Framework (peer assessment 2018) findings report.

Our proposed Corporate EDI Strategy and supporting actions plans underpin and flow from the council's *Relighting Our City Plan*, our pride values, Our People Strategy and the partnership aspiration to create a 'Wolverhampton for Everyone'.

The strategy will provide direction to our employment and service delivery activities and functions – as well as help to deliver against our corporate priorities in relation to; building stronger, safer, resilient communities, tackling health inequalities, social deprivation, poverty and social exclusion.

For this strategy, we have identified **four equality priority areas** to focus on over the coming three years. We are keen to ensure the broad equality priorities that we are pursuing will deliver real improvements for people, rather than focusing solely on the process itself.

Our priority areas for action

As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty Wolverhampton City Council must publish its equality objectives setting out our priorities for the next three years.

Priority one: Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standards we expect of ourselves and others will look to us as a source of good practice.

This means our senior leadership will continue to be visible in promoting a culture where positive relationships are built and where people can be themselves and are supported, valued and respected.

We know that our strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to maintaining a strong vision for equality and improving equality outcomes. Our strategic leadership will continue to play a central role in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

We also place an importance of working in partnership with local partners in health, police, fire and rescue services and the voluntary and community sector. Therefore, we will continue our focus on working together to narrow equality gaps and improve the life chances of different groups.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Improve our understanding of the boroughs diversity and changing communities and foster better understanding and relationships between communities.
- Continue to work closely with our business sector, community sector and voluntary sector organisations to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eliminated, that none of our communities are left behind or unable to access the opportunities and services that our city has to offer.
- Develop an Organisational culture where everyone is valued, respected and treated fairly and promotes a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the future
- Provide a working environment where all employees can be themselves and are given the space to be listened to and heard
- To make clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers
- To agree our 2030 vision for workforce representation

Our actions will include:

Visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEB sponsors to support all staff equality forums ▪ Staff forums involved in strategic SEB decision making ▪ Appoint SEB sponsors for Race, LGBT, Disability and Gender ▪ Quarterly reporting on workforce equality monitoring and respond to areas where we are not achieving ▪ Set workforce targets to increase representation at senior levels on the grounds of Race, Disability, LGBT and review/stretch each year ▪ EDI on the agendas for all leadership, operational managers and teams' meetings ▪ Launch corporate leadership Pledge ▪ Narrow the ethnicity pay gap (standing at 5.13% mean average) and gender pay gap (4.24% mean average) – capture data and publicise progress each quarter ▪ Introduce LGBT and Disability pay gap reporting from April 2021 ▪ Stonewall WEI Accreditation/ Submission June 2021 ▪ Sign up to the BITC Race at Work Charter in 2021 ▪ SEB to make clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers

- Strengthen and maintain key organisational partnerships with community and voluntary sector organisations who represent the needs of protected groups

Priority two: To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.

This means we will look at how we make sure we have people with a diversity of different characteristics and backgrounds working for the city council. Having a diverse workforce is important to make sure we represent the people we serve. The council also benefits from being able to draw upon a range of different approaches and points of view. One area we will particularly focus on is making sure we have a diversity of people with different characteristics at senior leadership positions within the council to reflect the population of Wolverhampton which is becoming more diverse.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Continue to push hard to employ staff that reflect the boroughs diversity
- To improve the diversity of the workforce at senior levels – key action is to set targets and agree vision for 2030.
- To close the 'pay gap' on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGBT.

Our actions will include:

To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.
Employment Matters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure recruitment practices are designed to attract and recruit for increased representation at senior levels. ▪ To support the business to embed effective succession planning to help retain and progress talented individuals ▪ To provide employees with a 'safe space' to report incidences of unfair /unequal treatment – and monitor impact ▪ Provide Wrap around support programme which aims to help individuals who have not secured a career progression - and monitor impact ▪ To have 100% diverse recruitment panels for all grades from January 2021 ▪ Review of grievance, disciplinary and management of attendance processes to ensure 100% diverse panels involved in decision making ▪ Provision of information at both application and induction stage about the council's inclusion commitments covering all protected characteristics and other information about the staff networks. ▪ Ensure progression, secondment and other opportunities are fairly available and that policies are fairly applied

- Communicate zero tolerance of harassment and bullying - ensuring performance objectives for leaders and managers cover their responsibilities to support fairness for all staff.

Priority three: To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development, where employees from across all equality groups show high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the council as an employer and where colleagues feel confident about being themselves at work.

The Council's Organisational development team provide a blended approach to equality and diversity learning and development, using both online learning and skills workshops. Equality and diversity is integrated into all modules of the council's organisational development programmes to help staff provide fair and consistent customer services and to work effectively within a diverse workforce.

Equality and diversity is mainstreamed into all organisational development programmes and activity to ensure employees understand their individual responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve and are able to work effectively in a rich diverse workforce – respecting people's uniqueness.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Take action that supports career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds
- Actively promote staff development opportunities targeting under-representative groups

Our actions will include:

Build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development opportunities

Organisational / Workforce Development

- Take action that supports career progression for underrepresented groups - on the grounds of Race, Disability, LGBT+
- Rollout of Mentoring programme targeting underrepresented groups – and monitor impact/outcomes
- Rollout of Brilliant Leaders Programme targeting underrepresented groups – and monitor impact/outcomes
- Active EDI Leadership programme for heads of service to be delivered early 2021 and monitor impact
- No Offence training for all managers/leaders to be delivered during 2021 and evaluate impact
- Ensure training programmes relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying include specific examples of incidences of unacceptable behaviour across all equality strands
- To provide additional support via Coaching and Wrap around support to those who have not been successful in securing a promotion/ career progression and monitor impact and outcomes
- Ensure all learning and development offers are inclusive, with targeted strategic interventions on specific equalities initiatives.

Priority four: To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Wolverhampton Citizens to realise their potential and to live safely. This includes tackling discrimination and longstanding inequalities that significantly and disproportionately impact on marginalised communities.

This means we will work to make sure our services remain accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of people living in Wolverhampton across all protected characteristics. This priority aims to improve access to services, improve service take up and outcomes for all.

A key priority of this strategy is to develop a greater understanding of the diverse needs, expectations and aspirations of our residents and customers and how they use our services, enabling us to better meet their diverse needs and preferences. We will collect and analyse relevant diversity information (where appropriate) to help us shape, inform and tailor our services to meet individual needs - this understanding of our service users will allow us to constantly test and challenge ourselves to ensure we are able to respond to current needs, as well as be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and tackle inequality in services identified.

We will support each directorate to help identify with their service equality priorities and develop service equality plans to support the delivery of this strategy. Please note, service specific priorities and actions have now been identified by each directorate and have been incorporated into their service equality plans for 2021.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Understand the barriers to equality experienced in Wolverhampton and act to remove them
- bridging the gap between the levels of deprivation and prosperity in the borough particularly focusing on:
 - raising educational attainment for all children and young people and reduce attainment gaps for target groups including children with special education needs or disabilities, those who are looked after in care, specific BAME groups,
 - reduce exclusion rates disproportionately affecting CYP, specific groups of White boys and those who are excluded from school
 - tackling rising unemployment particularly among young BAME communities and disabled residents and supporting those who are long term unemployed back into work
 - Reducing health inequalities particularly the issues affecting some BAME communities, LGBT communities, disabled and older residents.
 - Support residents who may be affected by mental illness or dementia
 - increasing education and economic opportunity across the borough
 - ensuring regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Wolverhampton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential.

- provide more accessible, responsive and inclusive services particularly focusing on:
 - Improving our understanding of 'hidden' disabilities and the challenges that disabled residents face in all aspects of their lives. We aim to work in a cross-cutting way and take a holistic approach to more effectively address the needs of disabled residents.
 - supporting those who do not usually get involved in decision-making to better understand how they can get involved and get their voices heard
 - Supporting residents to access on-line services
 - Providing services that meet the needs of a changing population.
 - capturing diversity data on service users and use this information to better inform service planning and delivery

Our actions will include

Provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services
Strategy Directorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To review data, systems and monitoring arrangements across all areas of the council, this to improve the council's understanding of local communities, its services users and better target services to meet individual needs. We will support services to record and analyse equalities related service data across the council, this to ensure services can a) demonstrate parity in service take up, usage, delivery and outcomes and/or b) propose action to tackle inequality in service- where disproportionality and/or adverse impact on protected groups has been identified.
Communication Directorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate outcomes delivered as a result of the BLM & equalities action plan and supporting service equality plans ▪ Promote key diversity calendar dates and provide communication & marketing to support high profile diversity dates and key events ▪ Provide communication support for the council's formal submission to the Stonewall Equality Index and signing up to the Business in the Community (BITC) Race at Work Charter. ▪ Provide communication and PR advice and guidance to the proposed development of the City Rainbow Quarter ▪ Provide targeted marketing advice and support to HR for recruitment campaigns to ensure content and messaging encourages greater interest from diverse groups.
Finance Directorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consideration of equality issues when planning audits, risk assessments, inspections and investigations ▪ Review & implement a revised Local Council Tax Support scheme – that is both affordable and takes account of diverse needs ▪ Work with partners (DWP, Welfare Benefits, Citizens Advice) to improve outcomes for our diverse residents affected by Welfare Reform - particularly the roll out of universal Credit ▪ Develop discretionary policies that are fair, reasonable and accessible to all people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate EDI and social value requirements into the councils new Procurement Strategy and procedures – taking account of end-to-end process • Ensure services are aware of the requirements to undertake an equality assessment when putting forward budget reduction and income generation proposals. • Evaluate the social value element of all programmes, initiatives and contracts.
City Assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure opportunities to occupy, purchase or utilise assets are community inclusive. ○ Community Asset Transfer Strategy – monitor & evidence to ensure response from diverse businesses, community organisations and individuals. ○ Review the accessibility of assets in the development of the capital investment programme. ○ Embed EDI considerations at each of the development stages in community hub/co location, refurbishment and new build projects. ▪ Project & Works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with procurement to develop a pre and post -contract equalities screening process ▪ Catering Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To consult with school nutrition action group to ensure meals meet the diverse needs of children/YP. Monitor outcomes ▪ Housing Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase accessibility of social housing, shared ownership and help to buy schemes to diverse communities and monitor take up /outcomes by PC's ▪ Introduce equality monitoring of WV Living properties
City Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extension of the mystery shopper exercise to include people from diverse backgrounds ▪ Environmental Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To create an inclusive burial service for all faiths ○ Create a permanent traveller transit site in City ▪ City Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of the 5year events strategy – review planned events to ensure inclusivity and take account of the diversity of the city ▪ Housing Strategy, Policy and Homelessness

- The review of Housing Allocation Policy to ensure people with highest housing need have the greatest opportunity - monitor outcomes by PC's
- Tenant Scrutiny Contract to be awarded April 2021
- Launch & host the New Communities & Migration forum

Regeneration

- City Development
- Work with procurement & EDI team to develop a pre & post contract award equalities screening process
- Inclusive Growth and EDI benefits to be carefully considered in all high value contracts and where high impact on communities
- Regeneration and economic development plans to extend beyond the City centre.
- Develop an Inclusive Growth strategy
- City Planning
- Ensure accessibility standards are met for new buildings (people with disabilities elderly)
- Monitor the no of planning applications refused by PC's.
- Adult Education
- Improve monitoring of LGBT+ take-up and success in learning
- Skills and Enterprise – we will ensure our communities benefit from the job opportunities created through economic growth, by supporting those who face most disadvantage in the labour market into work (apprenticeships)
- Provide services to YP 16-24 who have been disproportionately affected by unemployment due to the pandemic and monitor outcomes by PC's
- Provide services to people who are further from the job market due to health and disabilities, offenders, low skills/ no skills and monitor outcomes by PC's
 - Provide services for people over 50 people who have been disproportionately been affected by unemployment and monitor outcomes by PC's
 - Provide services for our SEND YP – outlining employment & volunteering opportunities and monitor outcomes by PC's
 - To improve access to business support for BME businesses

Adult social Care

- Review of data
- Establish data set gap analysis (this work will be influenced by the service checklists completed by each service area) – January 21
- Prioritise for improved data set/collection and recording for ASC within 3 months February –April 21
- Undertake equalities data analysis (review of service take up, service usage and experience and service outcomes – April
- Equalities action planning
- Establish priorities to challenge key inequality concerns identified (with a smart action plan – May 21
- Develop and agree dashboard with each service area to inform future service delivery – May 21

- ASC equalities action plan consultation (our workforce & our communities)- June 2021
- Smart action plan in place with clear priorities objectives and outcomes – June 2021
 - Workforce Training – training & support for all teams – March y
- a) enable our employees to ask questions about identity
- b) importance of gathering data
- c) understand the impact of inequality on families, individuals and communities

Children Services

- Review Data
- Ensure we are recording and analysing the right data across all PC's in relation to a) outcomes for children and young people b) employees - March
- Further embed/build equalities data into performance reporting arrangements and dashboards
- Review at Children's monthly performance meetings to inform future EDI priorities and develop SMART action plan to tackle inequality (Re: Exclusions, Attainment Gap, Children in Foster Care, YP in Care, Youth justice System) – April
 - Children's Practitioner Forum- To be established to inform ongoing equality priorities - April
 - Children Services Equality Pledge - To support our priorities/actions both internally and with key partners -April.
 - Youth Partnership Board - Children's workforce to be reflective of the City's diversity and equip them with the right tools to challenge inequality – May.

Public Health

- Intervention and response to the Pandemic.
 - Implement communication plan to reach diverse population
 - Maintain series of accessible engagement meetings with diverse groups to understand/address needs in relation staying well, taking rapid action if symptoms develop and support to isolate
 - Identify & respond to findings - following the focus group consultation with voluntary sector organisations – understanding barriers and support needs
 - Support and engage new migrant communities
 - Oversee implantation of the Learning community's partnership action plan
 - Provide tailored support to organisations that work with homeless people
 - Investigate and respond to the impact of COVID 19 on older people in the city
- Review of Data - Establish data set gap analysis, prioritise for improved data set collection. Undertake equalities data analysis, establish priorities to challenge key health inequality concerns identified. Develop smart action plan.
- Develop a Health Inequalities Strategy for the City 2021
- Support Refugee and Migrant Centre to create resilient and long-term sustainability.

<p>Community safety to explore opportunities for more cross partnership working to divert young people from gangs/violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen community cohesion forum in terms of direction and action
<p>Governance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender/ Race/ Disability and LGBT Pay Gap and workforce monitoring Reporting - quarterly- to assess progress on the council's commitment to have a workforce that reflects its diverse community. ▪ Revise Council's Disciplinary, Grievance and MOA – to ensure diverse panels in decision making and improved procedures ▪ Review recruitment procedures to remove unnecessary barriers/ disabling barriers to progression ▪ Ensure that procedures related to elections fully take account of all protected characteristics ▪ Increase its workforce representation for BAME and other under representative groups - particularly at managerial/senior levels. ▪ Develop a Workforce Equality Plan • Undertake Stonewall WEI Accreditation 2020 • 2030 vision on workforce targets agreed and monitored • Sign up to the Race at Work Equality Charter by April 21 – evidence the 5 calls for action.

7. Consultation Plan – on the Strategy

This strategy has been developed in line with Our council Plan and organisations values. We consulted widely and invited a wide range of partners, staff and stakeholders to comment on our strategy. The findings from the consultation shaped and informed the final strategy document that will be put before cabinet for approval.

Workforce consultation took place in 2021.

Extensive community and external stakeholder consultation also took place in 2021 virtually and through a survey. We reached out to Wolverhampton councillors, voluntary sector organisations and other stakeholders.

A wide scale survey was undertaken and the findings from residents across the City informed the final strategy document.

During the consultation process we:

- Shared our proposed vision for equality and asked people to what extent they agreed/ disagreed with the priorities. Respondents were also asked whether they have any other ideas to inform the vision and the strategy.
- Respondents were asked what other areas of inequality they feel the council should focus on.
- We asked respondents how the council could best keep people informed about its work on equalities.
- The questionnaire was open to everyone – Wolverhampton residents, staff, businesses and voluntary and community organisations.

8. Monitoring the strategy

The Corporate EDI Strategy will last for three years and will be supported by the Service Equality Plans developed by each of the directorates and the BLM & Equalities plan that emerged following feedback from the Race, Religion & Belief Forum meetings held with the Chief Executive Tim Johnson in June 2020 and the Gender, Disability and LGBT+ Staff Equality Forums meetings held with Strategic SEB sponsors during June – Nov 2020.

Our Strategic Executive Board will have overall responsibility for the strategic delivery of the strategy. This includes making sure that Equalities remains central to all work done by the council and holding directorates to account through performance reviews.

The Governance Director will have responsibility for the effective implementation of the strategy and its supporting service equality plans. Robust performance management arrangements will be put in place to ensure that we track and monitor progress on a monthly basis. High level summary reports will be provided, each quarter to the members Equality Advisory Group, Strategic SEB and the councils Corporate Equality Steering Group. We will monitor the delivery against performance indicators as set within each directorate.

The lead officer for EDI, who reports to the Director of Governance, will have responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the strategy's commitments and where necessary highlight issues of concern and make recommendations to SEB for further improvements.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- **Cabinet:** To consider equality implications in its decision-making; advance equality of opportunity in each portfolio area. Cabinet will receive updates on progress against the objectives during the year.
- **All elected members** - To be a community leader for equalities.

- **Senior Executive Board (SEB)** - To provide strategic leadership in the delivery of the council's equalities objectives and will receive reports on progress during the year.
- **Director of Governance:** as indicated above
- **Senior managers:** must be familiar with the strategy and be responsible for ensuring equality and diversity is an integral part of any policy development, service design and delivery, employment practices; and procuring and commissioning of goods and services.
- **Contractors:** To comply with equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- **All council staff:** To comply with the requirements of the approach, apply good practice and foster good relations with all stakeholders.