

UPDATE ON EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2023-2027 AND RESPONSE TO GM EDI STRATEGIES

Report of the Director of Strategy

1. Introduction and purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny an:

- Overview of our Equality Objectives which run from 2023-2027
- Update on progress in year 1
- Outline of our future priorities
- Update to scrutiny on how we are responding to the key GM Equality and Diversity Strategies.

2. Background

2.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is vitally important in ensuring that Stockport is a borough for everyone where diversity and inclusion are celebrated and where everyone has equity of opportunity.

2.2 As a public sector organisation we are committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. However more than that, we know we are stronger when we embrace diversity and encourage inclusion.

2.3 Consequently, creating a fair and inclusive borough is one of the core pillars of the One Stockport Borough Plan and a cross-cutting theme in our Council Plan.

3. Borough profile

3.1 We are becoming a more diverse borough. Our 2021 census data shows that we 16.6% of residents are from non-white British ethnicities and this is up 56.7% since 2011. However we are 12.1%pts below Greater Manchester.

3.2 Our population is aging. Proportion of residents over 65 is 4.3% higher than Greater Manchester.

3.3 91% of people in the 2021 census said they were straight or heterosexual, 1.7% gay or lesbian, 1% Bisexual, 0.3% other sexual orientations and 6% di not answer.

3.4 81.9% of people in 2021 census said that were not disabled under the equality act, 10.4% reported being disabled where activities were limited a little and 7.7% where activities were limited a lot. This was a small increase of 0.3% on the 2011 census.

4. Equality objectives 2023-2027 – Summary

4.1 Stockport Council must publish Equality Objectives as part of the public sector equality duty. Our Equality Objectives 2023-2027 were refreshed in January 2023

and developed through a cross-party working group. CRMG scrutiny committee was also consulted on them in January 2023 and they were agreed by cabinet.

4.2 Our current equality objectives are:

4.3 Equality objective 1: Stockport is a fair and inclusive Borough – A Borough for everyone, where diversity and inclusion is celebrated, and everyone has equity of opportunity

4.4 Equality objective 2: To support all staff to achieve their full potential and ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve – We know that diversity makes us stronger. It helps us to understand different perspectives and support our local communities better. Having an inclusive culture, benefits all of us working in Stockport Council. We want to create opportunities for everyone in a workplace where everyone can be themselves; where all colleagues are respected and treated fairly; where diversity is celebrated; and where everyone, regardless of background, can reach their full potential

4.5 Equality objective 3: To understand our diverse communities and their special needs – One of our objectives is to enhance the way we interact with and learn about the people who use our services and our communities. In order to gain a deeper understanding of our service user base and the ways in which diverse communities interact with the council, we aim to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Better data on equalities will enable us to better understand how our actions impact equity in Stockport, enabling us to create an equity-based strategy for our service delivery and enhance equality results.

4.6 Equality objective 4: To address inequality in our Borough - We know that some groups of people experience poorer life chances than others and that some identities can be a significant factor in determining outcomes, opportunities, and wellbeing. At a local and national level there are areas of persistent inequality which remain a considerable challenge. We will continue to focus on ensuring that everyone can access appropriate services and support.

5. Progress against our Equality Objectives 2023-2027

5.1 Equality objective 1: Stockport is a fair and inclusive Borough

Our progress so far:

- We have firmly established our Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) equity networks, which successfully mirror the Greater Manchester (GM) Equity Panels. These have been established to ensure the voice of our diverse communities is heard by the council in developing our policies and practice
- Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) networks are involved in our Town of Culture work and warm spaces initiatives. Furthermore, we have seen considerable growth of our networks, such as Stockport Women and Girls who have received £10,000 of funding.
- We have run various events to promote our fair and inclusive approach across the Borough and to celebrate our diversity. These have included the fair and inclusive summit, an Interfaith round table and celebrating International Women's Day,

Stockport Pride, and a range of activities for Black History Month. We also ran a Pride and Trans day of remembrance when we flew a progress pride flag from the Town Hall.

Moving forward:

- We will continue to strengthen our Equality and Diversity action plan and the Corporate Equalities Steering Group will own and strengthen.
- Our engagement and participation strategy is being developed which will specifically aim to include equity-based community groups and to recruit to strategic boards such as 'keeping it real' adult social care..
- We will develop sustainability plans for the equity networks and continue to strengthen our relationships with the GM Equity Panels. We will continue to celebrate our diversity and. Promote the wide range of diverse events taking place across the Borough as part of Town of Culture.

5.2 Equality objective 2: To support all staff to achieve their full potential and ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve

Our progress so far -

- We have continued to strengthen our employee networks through putting a Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) sponsorship programme in place.
- We have developed well-being passport which is due to launch and aims to support staff who need additional support when they move to other directorates.
- We are currently trialling a pilot programme in reverse mentoring. We have updated our policies which support transgender and non-binary staff and continue to celebrate events with our networks such as black history month and Stockport Pride.
- Both gender and ethnicity pay gaps within the council are now reported, with supporting data analysis to help us understand our diversity challenges and opportunities. A programme to support ethnic minority staff progression has been developed as a result of identifying our ethnicity pay gap, and we are doing a review of our recruitment processes including guidance and training on values-based recruitment.
- We focussed on inclusive employment. We have introduced jumpstart, a scheme aimed solely at care leavers aged 16-25 at risk of long-term unemployment. This scheme offers wrap around support available that includes offering additional training in critical areas such as CV building, application practice, interview preparation and working in a team.
- We have launched a supported internship scheme which is providing learning and work placements for young people with a Special Educational Need or disability.
- We have also been running inclusive job fairs which provide opportunities to apply and be interviewed for jobs on the day.
- We have been working closely with NHS partners to deliver a pre-employment training scheme supported by Health and Social care partners and Stockport college.

Moving forward:

- We are implementing a leadership development programme for aspiring leaders from those with characteristics underrepresented. This will include peer support

networks and mentoring/coaching support. There are challenge / education sessions due to commence with the Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Group .

- We will continue to strengthen our Employee Networks and involve them fully in the development and implementation of our People Plan.
- We will continue to use our data and undertake an annual deep dive data report on EDI and our workforce alongside quarterly reporting, and continued work to improve data quality . We will develop and maintain a dashboard of key indicators to evidence our performance vs EDI measures.
- We will focus on developing more inclusive employment practices to ensure we have a representatives workforce.

5.3 Equality objective 3: To understand our diverse communities and their special needs

Our progress so far -

- We have shared the 2021 census data across the council, and made easily accessible for colleagues in order to understand the demographics of our diverse communities. The census data was published publicly on the Big Stockport Picture. We also shared relevant census information with our VCFSE Equity networks, the interfaith round table, and our veterans.
- We have worked hard to increase channels for residents' voices to be heard in order for lived experience as a form of qualitative evidence to inform our service delivery. For example, Equity Networks are now more involved in engagement e.g., we have engaged with our networks about the One Health and Care Plan priorities, and Stockport's Future Vision.
- Our participation and engagement strategy and policy is in development and is based on key principles around engagement and a commitment to further co-production. We have strengthen participation across a number of areas. Adult Social Care have developed a 'keeping it real' board of service users. We have also established a Youth Alliance to ensure that the voice of Young People is core to what we do.

Moving Forward

- We want to further improve our use of data and ensure that EDI is a core feature of the work to develop the next phase of the Borough Plan.
- We will further develop and implement our engagement and participation strategy, including the identification of leadership and resource.
- We will work closely with our diverse communities to understand their lived experience, and in doing this, we will go to where they meet, rather than only inviting them to our meetings and offices. We will map channels for residents to engage formally, for example review the membership of our strategic boards.

5.4 Equality objective 4 - To address inequality in our services

Our progress so far –

- Using the data we adapt our services to respond to where there are gaps in people accessing our services.
- Public Health preventative services monitor impact and under-overrepresentation and take steps to proactively address for example in vaccination and breast cancer screening.
- Adult Social Care are currently analysing their data and will use their EDI working group to drive responsive change to their practice.
- The Fair and Inclusive team has delivered training for Councillors in EDI.
- Empowering Parents to empower communities (EPEC) 2 pilots with parents of ethnic minority children. A pilot programme with Proud Trust is in progress to support schools to create an inclusive culture for LGBTQ+ students. We are delivering 2 mentoring pilots for SEND and ethnic minority children at high risk of exclusion from school as part of a preventative approach. Delivered poverty proofing in schools which is a national best practice approach.
- Public health preventive services monitor impact and take steps to pro-actively address, for example, vaccination rates. Stockport Mental Health Services are monitoring their data to identify and respond to demographic trends in those using the services. We are now aware of the problems in mental health services around disproportionate sectioning and restraint of ethnic minorities, and the One Stockport mental health and wellbeing strategy sets out how we will engage more with our ethnic minority communities to put in place preventative measures.
- We use data to ensure our digital inclusion offer reaches those who need it most. We are working with the Stockport Race Equality Partnership to formalise qualitative data to use with the Team Around the Place to inform how we are working to support ethnic minority groups holistically. We work alongside GMP to work with black-led community organisations to support them in their community cohesion programme. We work with specialist providers and other partner agencies across the Borough such as The Hate Crime Partnership to promote fair and inclusive Stockport. .

Moving Forward

- We will continue to use data to adapt our services for example, ASC have established an EDI group to analyse their data. We will continue to strengthen the Corporate Equalities Steering Group with clear roles and responsibilities for directorate representation. We will work with each Directorate to identify priorities for actions which will respond to their particular data and intelligence, and which will contribute to achieving our equality objectives.
- We will continue to strengthen partnerships with our VCFSE sector. We will work with NHS partners to respond to the engagement undertaken with equity networks on the One Health and Care Plan and ensure effective feedback. We will develop a cross council approach to participation to ensure our services hear the voice of residents with lived experience.
- We will empower services to address inequalities in their services through a toolkit that includes training, use of data and best practice tools.

6. Greater Manchester's EDI strategy and priorities

6.1 As part of Great Manchester's work on equalities two significant reports have been

published over the past year. These two sets of reports have different origins and purposes.

- 6.2 The Centre of Dynamic Ethnicity (CoDE) and GMCA race inequality reports are intended to establish a baseline across a range of relevant data (in some cases the data are incomplete). The report does not contain formal recommendations but does highlight good practice.
- 6.3 Since the publication of the reports, steps have been taken to develop a GM Race Equality Strategy, including two workshops to support with the co-design of the strategy. Stockport Council have been fully engaged in this process.
- 6.4 The Big Disability Survey is based on engaging directly with disabled people and their lived realities and has five strategic recommendations.
- 6.5 We have responded to these recommendations and ensure that they are built into our plans. Links are available in background papers.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Greater Manchester Strategy: Ethnicity Evidence Baseline June 2022](#)

[Race Equality in Greater Manchester: An analysis of key issues May 2022](#)

[Greater Manchester Disabled People's panel and big disability survey 2022](#)

8. RISKS

- 8.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report. The many approaches to tackling inequality set out in this report are crucial for enabling more Stockport residents to live happy, healthy, and independent lives, contributing to the aims of the One Stockport Borough Plan.

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Public sector equality duty came in to force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and public authorities are required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9.2 To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, named on , to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6th April 2012)
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty (from 31st January 2012)

9.3 The council's equality objectives can be found at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-policies> . These are due to be refreshed in 2022. In addition, the council has in the last year strengthened its approach to Equality Impact Assessments including delivering training for managers in relation to the public sector equality duty and the need to have due regard to the points set out above.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

10.2 As part of our commitment to the Equality Act and previous equality legislation we monitor our performance in terms of the diversity of our workforce. More information can be found at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/data-and-information>.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11.1 The focus of this report is to provide a high-level update on activities taken to date and plans moving forward to address. The council has reviewed and strengthened its approach to Equality Impact Assessments, and it is expected that individual initiatives will develop robust Equality Impact Assessments that inform planning and delivery. The council's Equality Impact Assessments include consideration of demographic inequalities that are not classed as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 but nonetheless have an impact on inequality including those with caring responsibilities, veterans, care leavers, refugees and asylum seekers, and socio-economic background (particularly those on low incomes).

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

12.1 Whilst there are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report, climate change significantly impacts some communities more than others, exacerbating inequalities. Examples include food poverty, rising fuel prices and poor air quality. The issue of food poverty particularly was a focus of the Communities break out session at the Inequalities Summit on December 10. Climate Action Now therefore contributes to addressing inequalities and is an important strand of the council's and our partners' contribution to this agenda.

13. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the approach of the council's Equality Objectives and progress against implementing them.