



Report to: Council, 11th July 2023

Report of: Councillor Robyn Norfolk - Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Subject: REPORT OF MEMBER CHAMPION FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

1. Background

- 1.1 "Member Champions" are elected members of the Council appointed to act as advocates or spokespeople for particular themes or communities which should be of interest to the Council in delivering its functions.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 22nd March 2022, the Policy and Resources Committee considered a proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Annual Action Plan. The Committee approved both the Strategy and Action Plan.
- 1.3 The Strategy sets out arrangements for Member oversight and sponsorship of this work programme, including a proposal for a new Member Champion for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This Champion will act as a sponsor of the improvement actions set out in the Strategy and raise the profile of this work, particularly with other councillors. Their role will be to promote the importance of the Strategy across the Council's other Committees and with councillors generally. The Member Champion will also offer support and challenge to the lead officers in the Council responsible for delivering the Strategy and the Action Plan.
- 1.4 I was honoured to be unanimously appointed the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Champion at the full Council meeting on 29th March 2022.
- 1.5 My remit includes an annual report to Council on how the City Council is meeting its commitment to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.

2. Highlights Over the Last 12 Months

- 2.1 The Strategy was formally launched in the summer of 2022, highlighting and explaining our four excellence aims:
 - Understanding and working with our communities
 - Leadership, Partnership, and Organisational commitment
 - Responsive Services and Customer Care
 - Diverse and Engaged Workforce
- 2.2 As the Council's champion I was involved in the launch, highlighting the Council's EDI aims and objectives within the community in the local press, in my role in this chamber and in committee and through those events I have attended.

3. Promoting the Work of Local Organisations

- 3.1 In July 2022 I attended Worcestershire Royal Hospital's commemoration of the BAME members of our communities who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 In November I spoke with students at Worcester University about the Council's statutory duties to promote equality and the work behind the Strategy.
- 3.3 In November I also met with members of EDS UK, a charity dedicated to those living with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a condition affecting connective tissues supporting the skin, bones, blood vessels, and many other organs and tissues about the issues they experience during their day-to-day lives navigating the city.
- 3.4 In February this year I started working with Officers on issues affecting visually impaired visitors to the City Centre; this has continued past the election period, and we have begun work with Sight Concern Worcestershire and are planning a series of walks around the city with the organisation so that we can gain a clear understanding of what issues they face.
- 3.5 Also, in February this year I attended the vigil for Brianna Ghey held outside the Guildhall; a poignant gathering of the LGBT+ community and allies. We heard how LGBT+ people in Worcester, despite 40 years of progress, are still being victimised because of who they love or how they define themselves.
- 3.6 I have also attended meetings of the Worcester Inclusion Network, a loose gathering of charities and organisations representing and supporting residents in Worcester.

4. The Role of the Council

- 4.1 I have participated in regular meetings with Officers leading on the aims and actions of the Strategy, monitoring process of the Council's commitments and identifying areas where I, as Member EDI Champion, can use my position to highlight issues, and push forward the agenda to a wider audience.

I am delighted to be able to report to Members that:

- Because of the EDI Strategy, Lead Officers are now monitoring and reporting on actions to both the Personnel & General Purposes Sub-Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee.
- The Council has successfully bid for £60,000 of central government funding to go towards a new Changing Places facility in the disused part of the Cornmarket Car Park public toilet block. An additional £20,000 was approved by a recent Policy and Resources Committee to allow the Council to meet inflationary pressures and we have now been given the green light to start work later this year.
- We are using some of the most recent data to inform our policy and project work, this includes the most recent census data being used to target specific support in areas where that is needed, including considering linguistic and cultural needs of our residents in specific areas.
- The Council now has an Officer Equality, Diversity & Improvement Steering Group. This will ensure that the EDI objectives remain a priority for officers in all services of the Council, encouraging a more diverse and engaged workforce. At the time of writing, I am looking forward to meeting with officers during their second meeting on 5th July, to hear about the work that is going on behind the scenes as well as community, project, and internal policy work.
- The Council is working with officers and partners towards becoming an 'Excellent Disability Confident employer' ensuring that we have a diverse and engaged

workforce, enabling us to recruit and retain staff from a broader base and more reflective of the community we serve.

- Taking a different approach to consultation and engagement for our recent Play consultation, to try to ensure that young people as well those who may have special requirements from our facilities, took up the opportunity to tell us what they need from play spaces in the city.
- We have supported the Worcester Mela's appearance at the Worcester Show.
- Adopting some new policies which support staff inclusion, such as a Menopause policy and a Working Carers Policy. We also adopted a parental leave policy for Councillors.

In short, now we are in the second year of the Council's Strategy, we can provide evidence that will help us demonstrate that we are an Excellent local leader in equality, diversity, and inclusion.

There is much more to do and as Members I hope we can continue to drive forward the aims and objectives of our EDI Strategy in our roles as community leaders, making Worcester an even more vibrant, inclusive, and diverse city it already is.

I look forward to continuing working with officers and other Members on this important continuous and ambitious work.

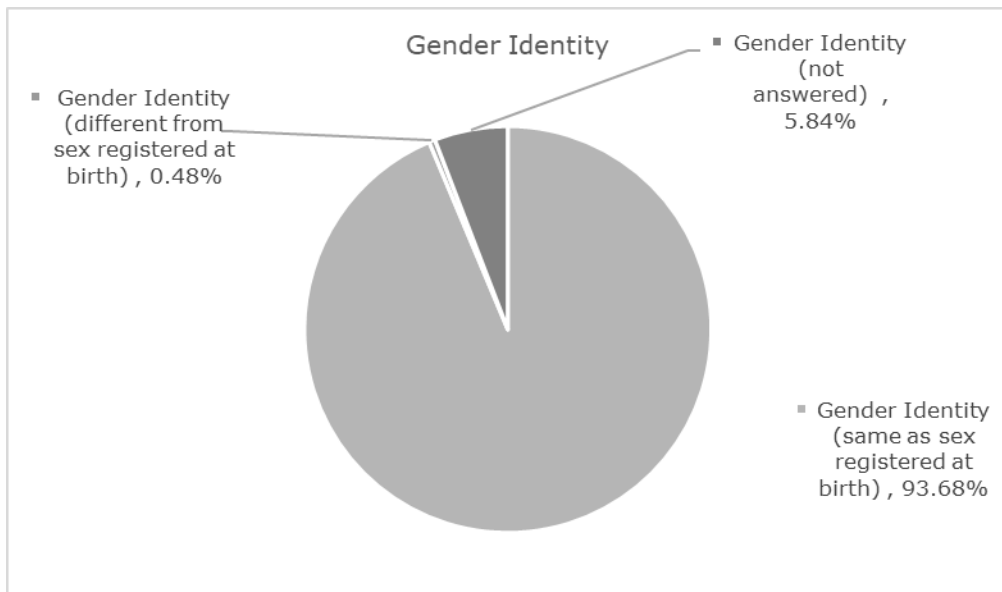
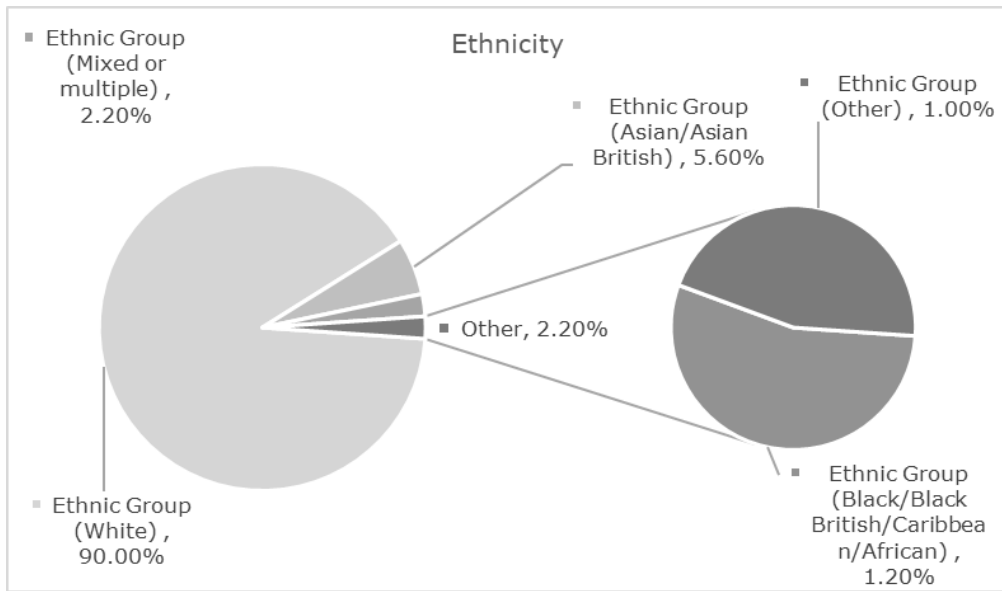
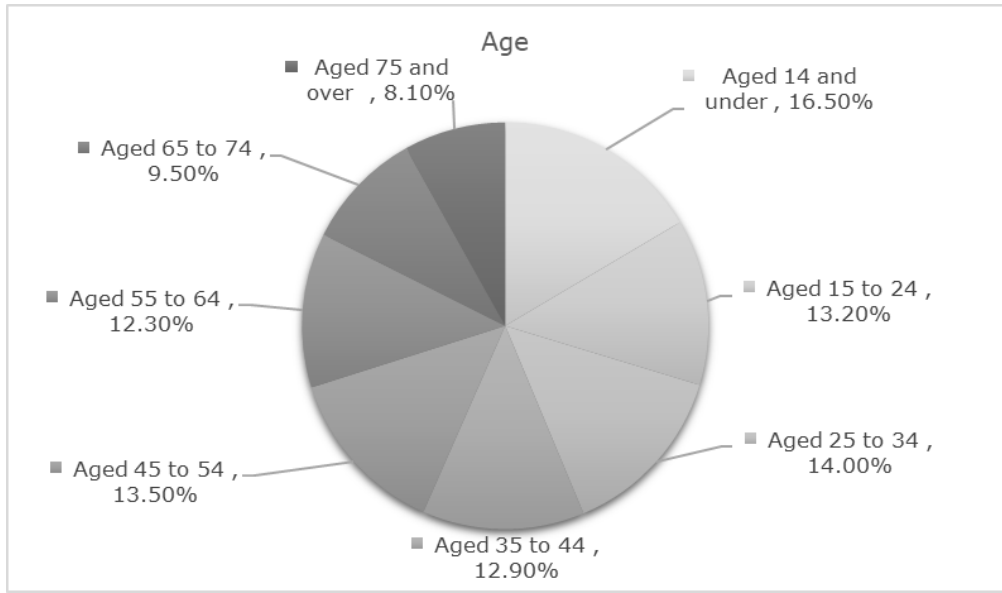
5. Any Matters to Bring to the Council's Attention

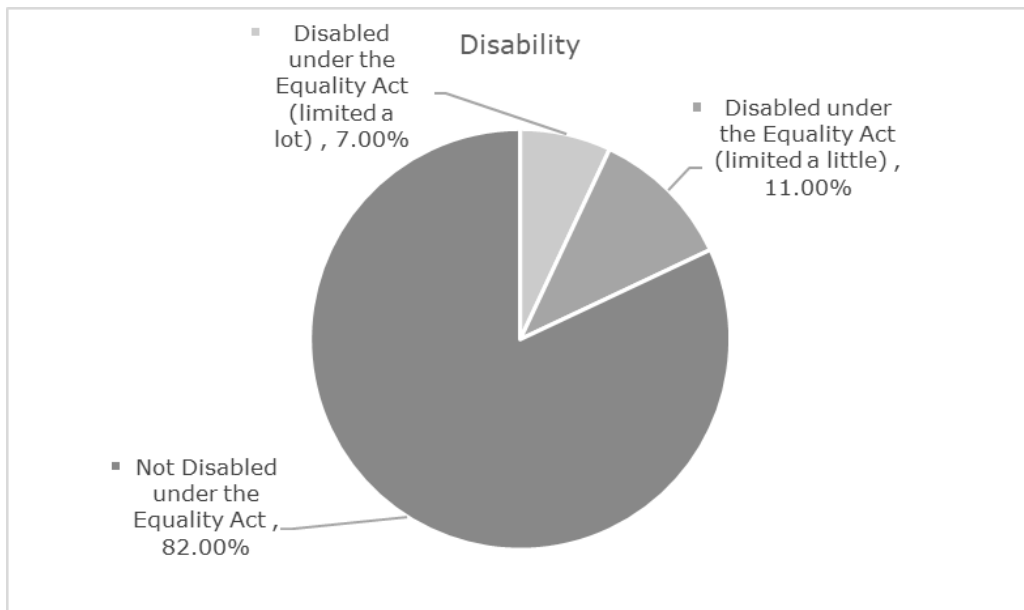
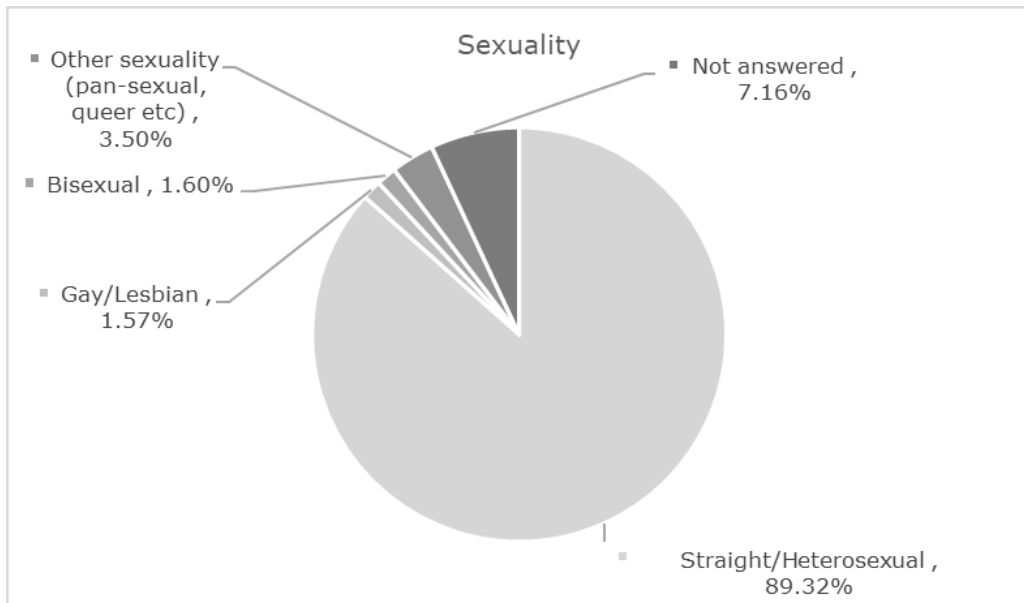
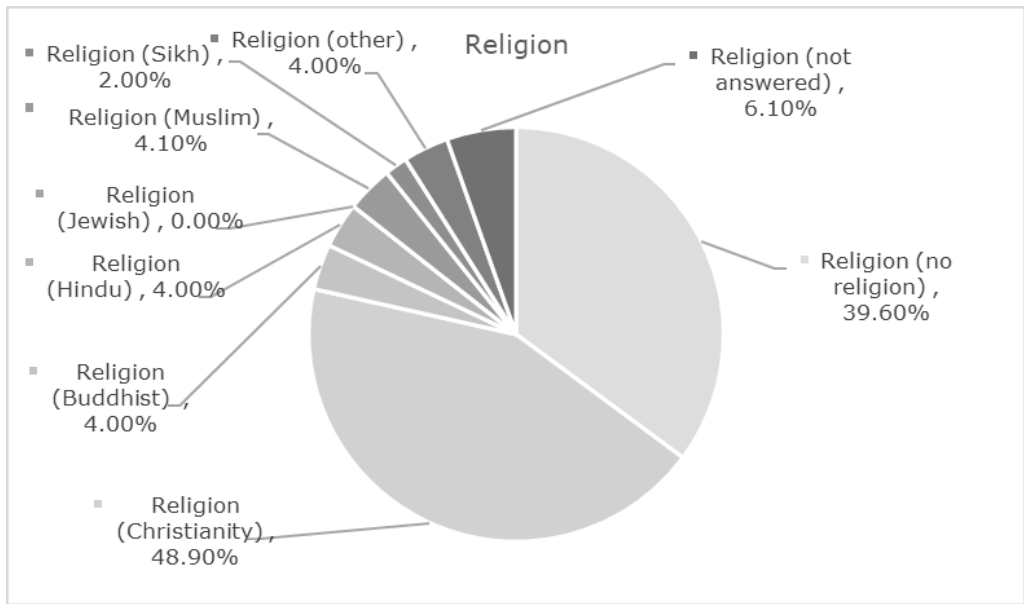
- 5.1 Members will have noted that Worcestershire Monitoring Officers group have arranged "Civility in Public Life and Social Media" training events on 28th June at County Hall, Worcester and on 10th July on Teams.
- 5.2 Officers have, in conjunction with the LGA, arranged a training session on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in-person at the Guildhall. The training session has been booked for the 19th of September at 7pm in the Court Room.
- 5.3 Officers and Sight Concern Worcestershire are working together to find a convenient date to have a public participation event walking around the city centre to raise awareness of the issues faced by visually impaired visitors.

6. Looking Ahead

- 6.1 A report on the Worcester specific results of the 2021 census will be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 25th July.

Census data focussing on some of the protected characteristics is shown below.





- 6.2 I look forward to engaging with residents' groups across the city, including but not restricted to Vesta Tilly Youth, a grass roots youth support club for the LGBT+ community and the Worcester LGBTQIA+ Forum to promote the Strategy.
- 6.3 I look forward to continuing my work with the Worcester Inclusion Network.
- 6.4 I also look forward to continuing the work we are doing with Worcestershire Sight Concern in identifying and working to resolve issues visually impaired visitors to the city experience.

Name: Councillor Robyn Norfolk

Date: 26 June 2023