

Report to: Council, 9th July 2024

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 particular 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 appointed as 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. My first report was presented to the Council in July 2023.

2. Highlights Over the Last 12 Months

- 2.1 I was flushed with pride to be able to officially open the Changing Places toilet in Cornmarket, the second such facility in the city.
- 2.2 I attended an LGBT+ Awareness Training session with officers from EDI steering group and the Communities team.
- 2.3 Following a suggestion from Cllr. Laurenson, we were able to arrange a Gypsy, Romany, and Travellers Awareness Training session for members and key officers, held over Teams.

2.4 The council continues to work towards delivering the Equality Strategy and the following table, outlines new actions taken during the year 23-24.

Understanding and working with our communities	Leadership, partnership and organisational development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop delivered to Members on understanding data from the Census, and other primary sources and explaining how Members can use data about their areas when decision making. Offering continued support with data. • Residents now involved in specific EDI issues at the Council via the annual survey. • Black History Month “Our Cultural heritage” day held at the Guildhall in October, facilitated by the Council but driven by communities. Large attendance demonstrated appetite for future events. • The community marquee at Worcester Show was a big success and showcased some small migrant communities in Worcester, as well as other community groups. • The Mayor and his chosen charity Age Concern hosted a Christmas event in the Guildhall with music and food for older residents. • Development of a proposal for a Worcester City Faith Covenant to encourage strong working relationships between faith organisations and the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Champion’s report to full Council. • Officers have been running an innovative “Speak up!” Campaign inviting people in the community to come in and talk about their lived experiences of discrimination and the importance of non-discriminatory language. This has proved a powerful and popular experience and other agencies in the city are looking to join in with it. • Health and wellbeing Member focus and liaison with local health groups. • Training provided to groups of officers and Members on EDI, LGBT and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues. • The Council has signed up to the White Ribbon Campaign and a small officer task force has been set up to drive the action plan. • Continuing to share experience ideas and best practice in EDI strategy with other policy officers from local authorities across the West Midlands. • Updated format for equality workforce monitoring report published on Council’s website to make it more interesting to read.

Responsive services and customer care	Diverse and engaged workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the recently completed Changing Places Toilet in the Cornmarket, only the second such city centre facility. • Members agreed to make an all- ages accessible playground a priority project in the new Worcester Play Plan. • Continuing to work with the Elections team to ensure EDI matters at forefront of the planning and delivery process. • Learning from visual impairment charities about city centre accessibility including in relation to public realm and cycling layouts. • Specific accessibility questions in the Annual Survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Equalities Policy, supporting both staff and customers. • Training and workshops delivered to officer teams on using up to date information and statistics on our local communities. • EDI Officer Steering Group now has workstreams and projects to deliver over the coming year, including engaging with young people and awareness about violence against women. • Assisting job applicants with CVs, applications and interviews. • Level 2 achieved in Disability Confident workplace standard. • Details of mental health support for employees was shared with Group Leaders.

3. Lowlights Over the Last 12 Months

3.1 Unfortunately, the training provider cancelled the promised member training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Officers are currently scoping EDI training for all members in the autumn, including the Equality Act, 2010 and the Public Sector duty under the Act.

4. Promoting the Work of Local Organisations

4.1 I have worked with officers, Sight Concern, and fellow councillors to organise a guided walk around the High Street to gain, at first hand, an experience of the issues faced by visually impaired people when travelling through the city.

4.2 In conjunction with officers and residents in the city, the Guildhall hosted a Black History Month event in the Guildhall. Occupying the ground and second floor – the event was well attended. There was a photographic retrospective, a hall of fame presentation, music, food, crafting, and spoken word events throughout the day.

4.3 Following the excellent Black History Month event in October, I am pleased to announce that the inaugural meeting of the Worcestershire Black Cultural Association was held at the Son’s of Rest in Cripplegate Park on June 25th.

4.4 In February 2024 I attended, with officers, a LGBT+ History Month event at the Swan theatre. I was able to speak about the council’s approach to EDI as well as

showing the council's support of Pride events within the city, we were also able to signpost some organisations to grant funding offered by the city.

- 4.5 In May 2024, I supported Eurofest also held at the Guildhall, a celebration of the various European communities within the city. There were a number of displays from the community showing their involvement in Worcester's history, music, dance, food, crafting and spoken word at the event.
- 4.6 I have been working with the newly formed Worcester Pride committee and ensuring that officers are informed of progress.
- 4.7 I was pleased to be invited to the launch of Play Worcester, the former Worcester Play Council and heard about the important role of play in a young person's development. Once again, we heard about the distinctive ways in which open spaces and parks are used by different genders.
- 4.8 The Community Engagement team along with local organisations arranged the City's first Windrush Day event, and the Windrush flag hoisted above Cathedral Square on 22 June.

5. The Role of the Council

- 5.1 I have participated in regular meetings with officers leading on the aims and actions of the strategy, monitoring progress 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.
- 5.2 In my role as Chair of Place and Economic Development, I took part in a Make Space for Girls training session involving officers and the committee's vice-chair. Make Space for Girls is a charity which aims to ensure that the voices of girls are centred in all projects involving public spaces and parks. It was heartening to hear that the charity is using our Play Strategy as an exemplar.
- 5.3 Officers ran the Speak Up! Campaign, talking to communities and local organisations about their lived experience and learning the importance of non-discriminatory language.
- 5.4 Following a motion to council, we have signed up to the White Ribbon Campaign and officers have started to work on an action plan.
- 5.5 Following a question at full council, and a report to Communities committee, officers are working with the city's faith organisations to agree a Worcester City Faith Covenant.
- 5.6 On the 6th of June, the city commemorated the sacrifices made 80 years ago in Normandy by those fighting to bring an end to World War II.

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

- 6.1 The guided walk around the city with Sight Concern highlighted some issues which fall under the County Council's remit. It has proved difficult to get Highways to effectively enforce, for instance, the A-Board policy.

7. Looking Ahead

- 7.1 The policy review process will continue, ensuring that all council policies will support equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- 7.2 Speak Up! Campaign findings will be published and made available to organisations across the city.
- 7.3 We will continue to work on accessible Worcester, including arranging a conference, and try to work on finding out how accessible Worcester is, and what can be done to improve access.
- 7.4 Officers are working on improving young people's engagement with the council including improving work placement opportunities. Working with senior schools and, of course, members, we may be able to offer a 'Youth Parliament' day here in the Guildhall.
- 7.5 I am keen to ensure that the open spaces and parks are accessible to all genders and ages. There are lessons to be learned from organisations like Make Space for Girls which will help us ensure that will happen.
- 7.6 Parents across the city are crying out for play spaces which are also accessible to those children with special needs, and officers are planning an accessible play space in the city.

Name: Councillor Robyn Norfolk

Date: 28 June 2024