Equality Policy 2018 - 2021

Oxfordshire County Council Equality Policy

Contents

Introduction

This Council is committed to the principles of equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion both in terms of our own workforce and with respect to the services we commission and deliver for local residents.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council approaches this commitment with our workforce and with respect to the services we commission and deliver in order that we make Oxfordshire a fair and more equal place in which to live and work.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty, the broad purpose of which is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business. One of the responsibilities we have as an organisation to meet this Duty is to publish an Equality Policy and a set of Equality Objectives.

This document explains what the Public Sector Equality Duty means. It demonstrates how we meet our responsibilities under the Duty, highlighting areas of good practice. It identifies areas for improvement and sets a series of Equality Objectives.

In assessing our current achievements and areas for improvement we have used the Local Government Association's Equality Framework self-assessment tool, analysed relevant data sources, and engaged directly with staff, in order to consider our current performance and identify equality objectives.

What is the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The broader purpose of the Public Sector Equality Duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business, and in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

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- Religion and/or belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Council determined that it wished to ensure focused areas of disadvantage, as well as individual protected characteristics, are taken into account in our service planning process. These are defined as concentrated geographic areas of significant disadvantage, which can include hidden pockets in otherwise affluent and often rural areas. These also include areas which are relatively isolated from access to services, particularly due to their rurality.

It is open to the Council at any time to review these additional characteristics, and to amend to reflect changing circumstances.

The Equality Act 2010 defines discrimination as the less favourable treatment of a person, because of protected characteristic, as compared to others who do not share that characteristic. The legislation also applies in cases where there is a belief that the person who is disadvantaged has a particular protected characteristic, whether that was a mistaken belief or not.

The International Holocaust Recognition Alliance definition of antisemitism[1] will be taken into account when giving consideration to how we are meeting the duty to eliminate discrimination.

The Public Sector Equality Duty was reviewed in detail in 2012-3. The review did not recommend any formal changes to the Equality Act but did note that in some parts of the public sector the response to the duty had been excessive, with money being directed away from front line services to information gathering and analysis, without any significant progress being made towards creating an equal and fair society.

The summary findings from the Race Disparity Audit ordered by the Prime Minister in August 2016 were published in October 2017. The view was to shine a light on how people of different ethnicities are treated across public services. This Policy and in particular our equality objectives, align well with the findings of this report.

How are we meeting our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty?

All of our work is within the context of the broad, overarching purpose of the Duty: tackling discrimination; advancing opportunity and fostering good relations.

There are also 3 specific responsibilities we have to meet under the Public Sector Equality Duty:

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[1] "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

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1. Consider how decisions that we make, and the services we deliver, affect people who share different protected characteristics and publish information to demonstrate that we have done this.

2. Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty. This information shall include information relating to people with protected characteristics who are: employees and/or those affected by policies and practices

3. Prepare and publish an equality policy, and specific, measurable equality objectives at least once every four years.

This Policy meets the third item on the list, the first two are described briefly in the sections below: Service and Community Impact Assessments and the Information We Hold and Publish.

Service and Community Impact Assessments

All public authorities are required to assess the impact of their functions on the individuals and communities they serve.

In this context, 'function' is a general term that could include strategies, projects or contracts. The assessment has five parts: gather information, engagement, analysis, objective setting and review.

The process we use to assess the potential impact of exercising any of our functions is called a Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA).

All functions undergo an initial SCIA that is proportionate to the significance of the change and the potential impact on individuals and communities, particularly those that share protected characteristics or are from areas of disadvantage. Completing a SCIA is important in helping to shape the development of proposals, understand the potential impact, and identifying mitigating actions to lessen this impact wherever possible.

This SCIA should be available to Councillors when giving consideration to any public function. This ensures they are fully aware of any potential impacts in reaching their decision. The most intensive period for the production of SCIAs is during the Council's annual budget-setting process, and managers are supported in SCIA completion by corporate advice, and a statistical briefing setting out information about the population of the county with regard to the protected characteristics. This can be found on the Oxfordshire Insight pages here.

Completed SCIA's are published on our public website at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/equality-and-cohesion. They are also available in alternative formats on request.

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Information we hold and publish

We comply with the requirement to publish information annually relating to people with protected characteristics who are employees and/or those affected by policies and practices in a variety of ways. We publish the outcome of our SCIA's and updates on our progress towards our action plan.

Further, Oxfordshire Insight publishes a 'Data Briefing – Focus on equalities' which provides a profile of Oxfordshire's residents based on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. This is largely drawn from open public data, in particular that published by the Office for National Statistics.

More detailed information relating to our service users can be found in our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and published on our website: http://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/

The JSNA report is updated annually and represents a rich source of information and data on the residents of Oxfordshire. This data is communicated to services and used in service planning. There are interactive dashboards dealing with specific themes such as population and a chapter devoted to data on people with the nine protected characteristics.

A short summary of the data we hold can be found in Annex 1, but the key facts are as follows.

Key Facts About Oxfordshire

- As of mid-2015, the estimated total population of Oxfordshire was 677,900.
- Oxfordshire's population aged between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, due to older age groups experiencing greater growth than younger groups.
- The 65-and-over population grew by 18%, while the number of people aged 85 and over rose by 30%.
- Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people aged 85 and over is expected to increase by 92% in Oxfordshire overall and more than double in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.
- Women remain slightly in the majority across the county (50.7%).
- All of the county's Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities have grown, and now account for 9.2% of the population, just under double the 2001 figure of 4.9%. There is considerable variation in ethnic composition across the county
- According to the 2011 Census, just over 9% of households in Oxford do not have any one member who speaks English as a main language.
- At the time of the 2011 Census, nearly one in seven people in the county said they were limited in their daily activities because of a disability or a long-standing health problem

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- Census data shows younger age groups of people with a disability in Oxfordshire similar to or below the regional and national averages
- Local data on sexual orientation and gender reassignment remains unavailable.
- In mid-2015 one third of the population of Oxfordshire lived in areas defined as rural. 42% of the population aged over 65 years old lived in rural Oxfordshire.
- Overall, less than 4% of Oxfordshire's population live in areas that are among the most deprived in England, however there are 2 areas within the most deprived 10% in England (in Oxford City) and a further 13 areas within the most deprived 10-20% (8 in Oxford City, 4 in Banbury and 1 in Abingdon)

We also publish an 'Equality in Employment Report' annually, the aim of which is to help the Council understand its workforce and use the information to ensure the actions, policies and measures it takes as an employer meet the requirements of the Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The latest report is available on our public website at: http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/fairness-and-equality-work. The 2017 Report led to a specific action plan which we commit to work towards achieving and these actions have bene incorporated into this Policy later on.

A short summary of the data can be found at Annex 2, but the key facts are as follows.

Key facts about the Council workforce

- Overall, based on those who have declared their ethnicity, the reported levels for BAME groups are at 7.18% for March 2017 which is an increase from 6.27% in March 2016, but still below the 9.2% of our residents who are BAME.
- The People directorate has 8% of BAME staff, however there is a much lower percentage of staff working in Communities directorate (4.08%), with the Fire and Rescue service having the lowest representation at 2.87%. This group are also underrepresented in the Resources directorate in areas of Law and Governance and Policy.
- The 2017 data shows that 3.20% of council staff have declared a disability which is an increase from 2.79% in 2016
- There continues to be a much higher proportion of female workers in the County Council which has stayed relatively static with 69.14% of staff being female as at 31st March 2017.
- There is a much lower percentage of females working in the Communities directorate at 35.33%, with the lowest percentage in Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service with 3.38% of whole time uniformed staff being female.

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- The highest percentage of the workforce continues to be the age group 45-54 at 30.25%, followed by those aged 35-44 (23.43%) and then 55-64 (21.87%), all categories of which are higher than their representation in the population of Oxfordshire
- Overall, numbers of staff declaring their religion have increased from 30.76% to 40.34%. Of those who have declared their religion the majority are Christian (54.12% in 2017), with a small increase in staff of Muslim and Buddhist faith. There is an increase of 2.78% of staff declaring no religion.

Assessing our current approach

The Local Government Association Equality Framework self-assessment tool, has been used to help review our current approach. This allows Councils to provide evidence against different performance areas and assess against a scale of 'Developing', 'Achieving' or 'Excellent'. We have completed the framework by engaging with staff and service areas across the Council.

The 5 performance areas and our assessment against them are:

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment	Achieving
Knowing your communities	Achieving
Involving your communities	Achieving
Responsive services and customer care	Developing
A skilled and committed workforce	Achieving

Gathering evidence in the self-assessment tool has identified areas where we are performing well and this has shown pockets of excellent practice. This demonstrates that we are successful in meeting the letter and spirit of our duties, even in situations where the context is service change driven in part by funding pressures.

However, we also recognise that there are areas where we need to do more to improve how effectively we meet the varying needs of local people, and the responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The following sections highlight the good practice we have identified, as well as the objectives we have set to improve our approach further.

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Leadership, Partnerships and Organisational commitment

Our leaders, both Councillors and Officers, demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of our local communities. There is a strong commitment from our senior officers to embedding the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in all our day to day business and this revised Policy and Objectives is demonstrative of that commitment.

Our cabinet member for Local Communities holds Equalities as part of his portfolio, and has responsibility for ensuring that we deliver our ambitions in this area.

The Council vision is to achieve thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire, with a particular emphasis on improving outcomes for young people, older people, those with disabilities and others who are vulnerable and need additional support. We also actively promote equality issues such as Transgender Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day and rainbow flag flying for LGBT awareness are widely promoted within the Council.

This commitment also runs through our close working with partners across the public and voluntary sector, including formal arrangement such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer Communities Partnership and Stronger Communities Partnership. It is also reflected in close working relationships with local organisations in supporting individuals and communities, and in providing services directly on behalf of the council.

The impact of this leadership and commitment can be seen throughout the rest of this document, in the objectives and actions we have set and the governance arrangements to oversee them.

Our Equality Objectives

As well as identifying areas of good practice the self-assessment tool, and an analysis of the data we collect, identified areas we need to address to better meet our commitment to making Oxfordshire a fair and equal place in which to live and work.

Our approach to achieving this is to identify a set of specific and measurable Equality Objectives which are as follows:

Objective 1: It is important that we know who our customers are and so we will ask you to tell us more about you when you contact our customer service centre and/or our complaints team.

Objective 2: We want to know what people think about the services we provide, so we will ask for feedback on our services to make sure we can take your views into account in future and our services meet everyone's needs.

Objective 3: We will improve access to our public website and other digital services we provide to make sure all residents are able to access the information they need as easily as possible.

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Objective 4: We want to make sure that our public buildings are accessible to all our residents and staff and so we will carry out a review to check this.

Objective 5: We will improve the quality of the data we collect about our residents and service users and make sure it is as current as possible. This will help us to respond better to the differing needs of our communities when planning and designing services.

Objective 6: Some of our services are provided by other agencies or organisations. We will make sure they know about our commitment to the equality duty, the protected characteristics and their role in helping us meet our objectives.

Objective 7: We will improve the balance of gender in our workforce, particularly in services where a group is under-represented.

Objective 8: We will increase the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in the workforce.

Objective 9: We will increase the number of people under 25 employed in the Council's workforce

Objective 10: We will improve how we support our employees with disabilities so they can be fully involved in the workplace, access career development opportunities and be successful at work.

Over the following pages, we explain how we have identified these Objectives through analysing the evidence collected in our self-assessment and the data we publish. We have collated our Objectives against key themes.

1) Knowing, Understanding and Involving Our Communities

We collect and analyse a significant amount of data about our communities, including accessing open public data, capturing equality information when surveying and consulting with residents, and taking the lead role in producing Oxfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This draws together what we know about the groups within our population who share protected characteristics, and is used as an evidence base to support strategic plans such as the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Oxfordshire Insight pages are also a rich source of information we collect on our communities.

However, our self-assessment highlighted that we do not currently undertake significant equality monitoring of inbound inquiries to the complaints team or at the Customer Service Centre. We don't collect data on sexual orientation or gender reassignment, partly because the wider data required to use these as a benchmark is not currently available.

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We also predominantly analyse information relating to the protected characteristics in a linear fashion, as this is the format in which data are predominantly available. We do however know that in some cases there are important intersections within protected characteristics, or between protected and other population characteristics. For example, in benchmarking staffing information with regard to ethnic diversity, it is important to note that there are significant differences in the ethnic make-up of Oxfordshire with respect to different areas of the county, and different age groups.

While there is much good practice, the Council has identified, predominantly through our self-assessment, that at a time of significant population change, the level of data we hold about our customers, and the use we make of it in planning, commissioning, and delivering services, is not at the standard we would hope, including regarding equalities-related information. This presents a risk to the effective and efficient delivery of the council's functions, and work is actively underway to review our approach to business intelligence.

While the council has a long track record of consultation and engagement with residents and service users, we are moving towards a coproduction model in which people who use and experience services are involved in their design, procurement and implementation. There are already a number of examples within adult social care where this approach has led to services that are better adapted to meet the needs of the people they are intended for, and this approach is now being extended across the council.

Objective 1: It is important that we know who our customers are and so we will ask you to tell us more about you when you contact our customer service centre and/or our complaints team.

Objective 2: We want to know what people think about the services we provide, so we will ask for feedback on our services to make sure we can take your views into account in future and our services meet everyone's needs.

We have a good record in involving our communities and we are committed to using a co-production model for all our services. We understand co-production as designing, buying and reviewing services with people. We mobilise people's strengths, expertise and assets to help commissioners to better understand the needs and priorities of local people and in creating innovative solutions that work for people of Oxfordshire.

Examples of the success of this approach in advancing our equalities objectives include the following:

Case Example 1: Daytime Support Services
Daytime support services for older people and those with disabilities or additional care and support needs in Oxfordshire have changed. The Council listened to over 600 people in planning the changes to services and the public were consulted on the proposed model. Over 1000 responded to the consultation. A number of key changes were made to the model in response to the consultation including a recommendation to increase the Sustainability Fund to respond to how much people want to prioritise funding for existing, valued services. The consultation raised the

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importance of accessibility and transport leading to a focus on supporting the 50% of currently funded services which use council-provided transport, to identify alternatives. The Community Support Service is now delivered from 8 buildings, in response to people's preference for this model.

Case Example 2: Voice of Oxfordshire Youth (VOXY)
VOXY is the idea of a young person, who decided we need to reach out to more children and young people than we have ever done before, especially the most vulnerable, to hear their views and opinions. VOXY's overall aims are to share resources, finances, buildings, knowledge and intelligence with partner agencies, so for example if one organisation is talking about Mental Health, another isn't duplicating that discussion and we can share outcomes and intelligence. One task for VOXY will be to hold the Children's Trust to account on delivering its children's plan. Children's Trust board meetings are held in the evening to accommodate reps from VOXY attending after school hours.

Case Example 3: Contract Monitoring - Quality Checkers
OCC need a range of learning disability services monitored (e.g. supported living, respite, day services, and in-patient services). The Adult Social Care Quality and Contracts team has been running a Quality Checkers service since 2016 in conjunction with My Life My Choice, a user-led Oxfordshire based self-advocacy organisation.

Quality Checkers are people with learning disabilities who have experience of using the learning disability services. Together with a supporting family expert by experience, they monitor each service as per agreed criteria and complete a monitoring feedback form on the same day. The Quality & Contracts Team use this information to inform their quality monitoring reviews and frequently quote from the Quality Checkers reports.

This means that the service user voice is clearly embedded in OCC's Quality Monitoring systems. The service is an example of successful co-production work and is a valuable resource to the Contracts team.

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2) Local, Accessible and Responsive Services

There are a number of examples of good practice for this section, where council services are designed to ensure they are local, accessible and responsive to differing needs of people who share protected characteristics. These are also informed by the outcomes of Service and Community Impact Assessments as detailed above and which are integrated into decision making across Council services.

Case Example 4: Home Library Service

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Our home library service launched in 2015 offers a service to people who are unable to visit the library themselves through frailty, infirmity or a disability and would have no other means of getting access to reading materials. Over 600 customers across the county receive the service and are supported by 185 volunteers. The library service alone has over 800 volunteers in total, who last year contributed over 30,000 hours of volunteering to the service.

Case Example 5: The Comet Bus
The Oxfordshire Comet is a bookable transport service for those who can't access suitable public transport and is suitable for wheelchair users or those with mobility issues. The 16-seater vehicles are driven by friendly drivers who are happy to offer some extra assistance getting on or off the Comet, or with carrying shopping inside. It is a not-for-profit service. Comet currently has over 120 registered individual members with approx. 75% of them using the service on a regular basis. The comet also provides transport for 20+ organised groups varying from a mix of multi-Parish Council groups to residential care homes. The large majority of our customers are elderly who are unable to access public transport. Comet is a success, providing transport to approx. three hundred plus people across the county as and when they need it.

Case Example 6: Schools Accessibility Strategy
In 2017 the revised accessibility Strategy 'Joining In' was launched to all schools in Oxfordshire. Children and young people who were involved in giving feedback for this strategy stated that equality was: Being fair and having equal rights; Being able to be different but not being treated differently; Being different but not being picked on because of it; Being the same and being treated the same.
The strategy provides schools with practical tools and examples of good practice and sets out how Oxfordshire County Council proposes to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the schools for which it is responsible. The toolkit has been shared on our public website and via Schools News, as well as at inclusion briefings with Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOS) across the county.

Case Example 7: Highways Design
The Council residential road design guidance provides design parameters such as footway widths. It also signposts designers to documents such as 'Inclusive Mobility'. The team ensures that such factors have been considered as they audit designs, demonstrating how the highways design processes consider equality impact of highway infrastructure. Staff have attended an immersive disabilities awareness course where staff share experiences with service users as they make their way through construction sites within Oxford. This included using a wheelchair to ensure better appreciation of needs during highways design.

Case Example 8: Public Paths Orders Consultation

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We run many consultations for Public Path Orders throughout each year, regarding the location of a route. We work proactively prior to Order making, taking into account the location of route, and appropriateness of accessibility measures such as gates, stiles, gradients and cross falls. We consult with the Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group on these Orders, as they have particular interest in improving highways and travel in Oxfordshire for disabled and mobility impaired people. We often get requests for additional measures such as benches on new routes and liaise with landowners to achieve this.

Although we have some evidence of good practice, overall the evidence shows that we need to work harder to become an Achieving authority against this performance area. Specific areas of focus are accessibility and how we use the data we collect. We also recognise that improvement is required regarding the communication of our objectives to our partners and commissioned services. Targeting these areas will improve how we foster good relations within our communities and also work towards eliminating discrimination.

The data in the JSNA shows that we are an ageing population and we have an increasing number of residents who are limited in some element of their daily activities by disability (1 in 7). We also know that these groups on the whole do not have the same level of digital proficiency or preference as many in the younger age range. As part of our website redesign we aim to improve the quality of information we provide to make it more accessible to everyone.

Objective 3: We will improve access to our public website and other digital services we provide to make sure all residents are able to access the information they need as easily as possible.

In the past councils nationally have been criticised for high levels of spending on translating council documents, and on interpretation. Oxfordshire's translation spend has been, and remains, relatively low. Where documents are translated it is usually from a foreign language into English for legal purposes, rather than vice versa. Increasingly, councils encourage support within communities for those with limited English skills, and on promoting those English skills. We will continue to provide translation and interpretation where there is a sound commercial or service reason for doing so.

Accessibility also means those who need to being physically able to access our buildings, and also to use our transport routes. Protected characteristics include those which make accessing buildings more challenging. We will consider accessibility alongside our review of the use of our Council buildings to both ensure we use our assets in the most efficient way, but also that our communities can access the properties we do maintain. We will also take accessibility into account as part of Highways Design.

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Objective 4: We want to make sure that our public buildings are accessible to all our residents and staff and so we will carry out a review to check this.

We are committed to improving the data we collect and Objectives 1 and 2 demonstrate this. Alongside this, it is equally important that we then go on to analyse this information effectively and use what we know to influence our service planning and provision to improve the service we provide to our residents.

Objective 5: We will improve the quality of the data we collect about our residents and service users and make sure it is as current as possible. This will help us to respond better to the differing needs of our communities when planning and designing services.

As well as the services we provide directly, our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion extends to services delivered on our behalf through contracts and commissioning, and through services linked closely to the council such as schools. It also includes working with our partners to ensure the same high standards apply across those that we commission services from, whether they are public, private or voluntary sector organisations. We recognise we need to do more to ensure that our commissioned services are aware of our equality objectives, and contribute to us achieving them. This will ensure our principles of equality, diversity and inclusion extend further.

For example, it is important that the services we commission to provide home care are aware of, and are working towards, our principles of equality, diversity and inclusion as they are working with groups with protected characteristics. Our commissioned services can then help us achieve our Equality Objectives.

Objective 6: Some of our services are provided by other agencies or organisations. We will make sure they know about our commitment to the equality duty, the protected characteristics and their role in helping us meet our objectives.

3) **Promote a culture of fairness and inclusion in employment demonstrating our commitment towards greater equality in our workforce.**

A workforce which more closely resembles the community it serves is more likely to be one which engages intelligently with the needs of that community. Our Equality in Employment Report is updated annually and can be found here. The Report provides a detailed analysis of the make-up of our workforce. A summary of the findings is included at Annex 2. It is important to us that our workforce is diverse and reflects our communities, but also that as an employer, we are advancing equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

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The focus for the evidence gathered in our self-assessment was on how we are committed to the principles of fairness, diversity and inclusion in our workforce, both in terms of the advice and training we give to our staff in these areas, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, in the make-up of our workforce.

There are a number of examples of good practice and initiatives to improve the diversity of our workforce, and to ensure it reflects the local community:

Case Example 9: Fire and Rescue Service Selection Days

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service run a recruitment and selection event every quarter to recruit staff for the On-Call duty system. This requires the individual to undertake a number of tests to ensure they have the required level of fitness and strength to undertake the role and that they have the aptitude required for working at height/working in a confined space. Earlier this year OFRS carried out a review of this recruitment and selection event, updating webpages with clearer explanations of the disciplines. There is more information given about expectations. There is increased support during the event, to make the day more open and friendly. The number of tests were reduced resulting in a shorter day, which is better for the welfare of those attending. Feedback from individuals who have attended the more recent events is very positive, including feedback from the under-represented groups OFRS are working to attract and recruit. Comments were made about how much more open, friendly and supportive they had found the day.

Case Example 10: Oxfordshire Employment Service

Our Employment Service supports equality by directly supporting adults for whom health or disability is a barrier to employment. This involves providing specific casework support, led by a skilled and qualified team. Over the last 6 years the service has worked with over 600 people. In the last year, over 60 people have found sustainable employment. Of those we support to find employment, the rate of sustainment for past 1 year is just below 70%. The service directly employs, within County Print Finishers, 24 people who have a disability. Oxfordshire Employment Service has achieved Leader status within Disability Confident.

Case Example 11: Disability Confident Employer

The Council is a Disability Confident Employer. We are committed to supporting and developing all staff and appointing the best person to do the job based on their skills and abilities. If a disabled person meets the essential selection criteria for a job, they will be guaranteed an interview. We are also committed to making reasonable adjustments to make sure disabled employees can develop and use their abilities and make every effort when employees become disabled to support them to stay in employment. The 2017 data shows that the percentage of staff declaring a disability has increased. In 2016-17 20% of disabled job applicants were appointed.

Case example 12: Stonewall Diversity Champion

Over the summer of 2017, we signed up as a Stonewall Diversity Champion. Stonewall are Europe's largest lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) charity. They know that people

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perform better when they can be themselves and that's why they have created Diversity Champions, the leading employers' programme for ensuring all LGBT+ staff are accepted without exception in the workplace. We want to ensure all our staff can be themselves at work without fear of intimidation, bullying or harassment. We have engaged Stonewall to review some of our policies, such as Equality and Diversity in the Workplace, Dignity at work, Maternity, Adoption and Paternity, to ensure we are being LGBT+ inclusive and using gender neutral language.

We know that women are in the slight majority in our county (50.7% in 2014). There are a higher proportion of females working across all services in the People directorate, especially in Children's Services and Public Health. These roles traditionally attract more women than men due to the nature of the work. However, there are a number of our service areas where women are significantly under-represented including the infrastructure and highways functions and the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue service are working hard to address this imbalance as demonstrated in the example earlier regarding changes to their recruitment process.

Objective 7: We will improve the balance of gender in our workforce, particularly in services where a group is under-represented.

We know from the JSNA that members of all the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups increased between the Census in 2001 and 2011; the numbers have in fact doubled (though as noted above the level of BAME population, and its composition, vary significantly across different age groups). The BAME communities in Oxfordshire account for 9.2% of the working age population.

Although there has been a slight increase in the number of staff from BAME groups, (of our workforce who have declared their ethnicity, 7.18% are from BAME groups), we recognise that we need to do more so that our workforce better represents our communities. These groups are particularly under-represented in the Fire and Rescue Service, Cultural Services, and Law, Governance and Policy. The issues are priorities with the workforce strategy.

Objective 8: We will increase the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in the workforce.

We know that young people are under-represented in our workforce. The Census 2011 showed that 13.78% of our population was aged 16 – 24, our workforce in March 2017 was comprised of 3.93% of this age group. This was a reduction from 4.25% in March 2015. This age bracket does of course include those in full time education or further education however, there is work that could be done to attract young people to a career in the Council, and increase the representation of this age group.

Our Apprenticeships scheme is designed to encourage younger people with the relevant career ambitions and aptitudes to consider starting their career with the

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council, gaining both employment and vocational training as part of that. The majority of our apprenticeship vacancies are only open to those under-25.

Objective 9: We will increase the number of people under 25 employed in the Council's workforce

We already know that in the Census 2011, 13.6% of our population felt they were limited in their daily activities because of a long-standing health problem or disability. Rates of disability vary significantly by age, with the percentage increasing with age. While some of these will have disabilities which are of such significance that it is not realistic for them to undertake paid employment, data collected about our workforce shows a significant gap with only 3% declaring themselves to have a disability, and that disabled staff are disproportionately low paid. The staff survey conducted in 2016 received a 45% response rate and through this anonymous channel, 9.13% of staff declared that they had a disability or long-term health problem. This discrepancy shows that further work needs to be done to encourage staff to declare their disabilities, so support can be provided if required.

Objective 10: We will improve how we support our employees with disabilities so they can be fully involved in the workplace, access career development opportunities and be successful at work.

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Action Plan

In achieving the objectives we have set for ourselves, we have also identified the following key actions that we will take. These actions will be monitored closely and updated regularly to reflect progress, and any emerging or developing areas of focus:

	Objective	Officer responsible	Actions (including by when?)
1	It is important that we know who our customers are and so we will ask you to tell us more about you when you contact our customer service centre and/or our complaints team.		
2	We want to know what people think about the services we provide, so we will ask for feedback on our services to make sure we can take your views into account in future and our services meet everyone's needs.		
3	We will improve access to our public website and other digital services we provide to make sure all residents are able to access the information they need as easily as possible.		
4	We want to make sure that our public buildings are accessible to all our residents and staff and so we will carry out a review to check this.		
5	We will improve the quality of the data we collect about our residents and service users and make sure it is as current as possible. This will help us to respond better to the differing needs of our communities when planning and designing services.		
6	Some of our services are provided by other agencies or organisations. We will make sure they know about our commitment to the equality duty, the protected characteristics and their role in helping us meet our objectives.		
7	We will improve the balance of gender in our workforce, particularly in services where a group is under-represented		
8	We will increase the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in the workforce.		
9	We will increase the number of people under 25 employed in the Council's workforce		
10	We will improve how we support our employees with disabilities so they can be fully involved in the workplace, access career development opportunities and be successful at work		

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Monitoring and Governance

Our evidence gathering has highlighted a need for more robust governance on the equality objectives to further ensure that equality, inclusion and diversity is embedded within service planning and delivery across all our workstreams. Our equality objectives should be incorporated into service-level plans to ensure our equality principles are understood and acted upon at all levels within the organisation.

The Cabinet Member for Local Communities will have overall responsibility for ensuring that we are compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty, that we achieve our equality objectives, and that they are reviewed and updated to reflect any changing or emerging priorities.

Each equality objective will be owned by a senior officer, who will oversee the implementation of agreed actions to achieve it and a working group will monitor the action plan as a whole. That group will produce quarterly updates for the County Leadership Team and Cabinet referencing progress and performance against our proposed actions, and an annual report to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The annual report will be raised to the Council Leadership Team and Cabinet, as part of the Council's performance monitoring and risk management arrangements.

We will continue to publish information about our communities, our performance, the outcomes of SCIAs, new policies, and proposals for changes in service delivery.

We will continue to consult both formally and informally with key stakeholders and the public to inform our service planning and decision-making, including our approach to coproduction.

Further Information

Contact details:
Policy team, 2nd Floor, County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

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Annex 1 – Summary of data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on our residents

As of mid-2015, the estimated total population of Oxfordshire was 677,900. Over the ten-year period, 2005 and 2015, there was an overall growth in the population of Oxfordshire of +8%, similar to the increase across England (8.3%). The five-year age band with the greatest increase over this period was the newly retired age group 65 to 69 +38%. There was a decline in the population aged 35 to 44.

Oxfordshire County Council population forecasts, based on expected housing growth, predict an increase in the number of Oxfordshire residents of +27% between 2015 and 2030, taking the total population of the county from 677,900 to 864,200. This is more than double the growth of the previous 15 year period (2000 to 2015).

Oxfordshire Insight published a Data Briefing - Focus on Equalities in October 2015 which provides a profile of Oxfordshire's residents based on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. More recent data on the population groups and those with protected characteristics can be found in Chapter 3 of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017. The JSNA is updated annually and gives the most up to date profile of our communities.

Below is a short summary of information from the Equalities Briefing and JSNA at the time of writing.

- We are an ageing population

Oxfordshire's population aged between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, due to older age groups experiencing greater growth than younger groups. The 65-and-over population grew by 18%, while the number of people aged 85 and over rose by 30%. The number of people in their 30s in the County fell by 12%. The number of children aged 4 and under grew by 13%.

Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people aged 85 and over is expected to increase by 92% in Oxfordshire overall and more than double in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

- Women remain slightly in the majority across the county (50.7%).

- The ethnic composition of Oxfordshire changed between the 2001 and 2011 censuses.

All of the county's Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities have grown, and now account for 9.2% of the population, just under double the 2001 figure of 4.9%. There is considerable variation in ethnic composition across the county.

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According to the 2011 Census, just over 9% of households in Oxford do not have any one member who speaks English as a main language. This is over double the figure for the county as a whole.

- At the time of the 2011 Census, nearly one in seven people in the county said they were limited in their daily activities because of a disability or a long-standing health problem.

Census data shows younger age groups of people with a disability in Oxfordshire similar to or below the regional and national averages.

Rates of disability vary significantly by age and district. Younger age groups have similar or below regional and national averages, however higher rates are found in the older age groups. Wards in Oxfordshire with higher rates of disability overall are those with a higher proportion of older residents.

- Local data on sexual orientation and gender reassignment remains unavailable.

The 2011 Census did not include a question on sexual orientation and it is difficult to obtain reliable data on the number of people identifying their gender as different from the one assigned to them at birth.

- In mid-2015 one third of the population of Oxfordshire lived in areas defined as rural. 42% of the population aged over 65 years old lived in rural Oxfordshire.

- Oxfordshire has relatively low levels of deprivation overall however there is considerable variation across the county. Overall, less than 4% of Oxfordshire's population live in areas that are among the most deprived in England, however there are 2 areas within the most deprived 10% in England (in Oxford City) and a further 13 areas within the most deprived 10-20% (8 in Oxford City, 4 in Banbury and 1 in Abingdon)

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Annex 2 – summary of data from our Equality in Employment Report 2017

- Ethnicity

Overall, based on those who have declared their ethnicity, the reported levels for BAME groups are at 7.18% for March 2017 which is an increase from 6.27% in March 2016. The Census 2011 showed that the county's BAME communities account for 9.2% of the working age population so the representation of this group within the council's workforce is not quite proportionate to their representation in the county. This is particularly the case for Asian or Asian British staff who make up 2.34% of the council's workforce which is an increase from 2016, but lower than their representation in the Oxfordshire community.

- Disability

The percentage of council staff declaring a disability has been gradually increasing over the last few years. The 2017 data shows that 3.20% of council staff have declared a disability which is an increase from 2.79% in 2016.

- Sex

The 2011 census showed that for the county as a whole, 49.91% of the local population of working age are female. There continues to be a much higher proportion of female workers in the County Council which has stayed relatively static with 69.14% of staff being female as at 31st March 2017. The percentage of females has reduced by 3.46% over the last 5 years. There is a much lower percentage of females working in the Communities directorate at 35.33%, with the lowest percentage in Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service with 3.38% of whole time uniformed staff being female. The People Directorate are better represented which may be due to the nature of the work involved.

- Age

There have been no major changes in the age profile of the council in March 2017 compared to the previous year. The highest percentage of the workforce continues to be the age group 45-54 at 30.25%, followed by those aged 35-44 (23.43%) and then 55-64 (21.87%), all categories of which are higher than their representation in the population of Oxfordshire. The youngest age group 16-24 has decreased slightly over the last three years from 4.25% in 2015 to 3.93% in 2016 and continues to be under-represented in the workforce.

- Religion

Overall, numbers of staff declaring their religion have increased from 30.76% to 40.34%. Of those who have declared their religion the majority are Christian with numbers decreasing slightly from 56.55% in 2016 to 54.12% in 2017. Overall there have only been minor changes to the percentage of staff in each religious group. There has been a small decrease in the percentage of Jewish and Hindu staff. There

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has been an increase of 2.78% in people with no religion and also a small increase to the percentage of Muslim and Buddhist staff.

- Sexual orientation

Currently we do not ask applicants for their sexual orientation during recruitment and this data is unavailable for staff to update. Therefore, we are unable to report on current figures. This information was not collected during the Census 2011.

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