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This strategy has been informed from the contributions from our employees, communities, voluntary and community organisations and our partners from the public sector and business. We are grateful for the local insights, comments and ideas that has made this a truly Birmingham strategy, shaped by the lived experience of our citizens and underpinned by robust academic research.

Published May 2021

Foreword

The events of the last year have again illustrated, in the starkest and most brutal of ways, the extent to which we live in a deeply unequal society.

The COVID pandemic may have led to more public discussion about the extent of inequality in modern Britain, but the truth is that poverty, disadvantage and discrimination have been eating away at the heart of our society and economy for years. The pandemic didn't create these injustices, but it has hugely intensified their impact on individuals and communities.

It cannot ever be acceptable that opportunities and life chances for so many remain a condition of their race, class, gender or disability. And for those of us who have been put in positions of leadership, our core mission must always be to break down those barriers, smash the glass ceilings and put power and opportunity in the hands of people and communities. As we emerge from the pandemic, that mission is more important than ever before. We must build back fairer, as well as better.

English local government, frustratingly, is a deeply underpowered creature compared to our American or European counterparts. It is true that not all the levers we need to pull to deliver economic and social justice are in our hands. But that is no excuse for inaction. So that is why, here in Birmingham, we're making it clear that we will pull all the available levers, marshal all the available resources and put tackling inequality at the heart of the Council's plans for the city as we start to rebuild from the pandemic.

Our plans focus on three key areas. First, it is vital that this Council leads by example, not least in its role as a major employer. We are already facing up to some harsh facts about the degree to which our workforce, especially at the most senior levels, does not reflect the diversity of the city it seeks to serve – and set out some radical plans to put this right. This work will continue, at pace and in partnership with our workforce, over the coming months.

Second, we cannot deliver this agenda alone. Partnership with other sectors, agencies and crucially, our communities and citizens, is the only way we will deliver meaningful change in our society and economy. The partnership work we are doing to make Birmingham a Living Wage city and build an inclusive economy; putting “experts by experience” at the heart of our decision making through the new Poverty Truth Commission and the ongoing delivery of social value through our commissioning and procurement activity are motivated by that spirit of cooperation and common endeavour.

Third, we need to ensure we celebrate and share the stories of diversity and dynamism that have made Birmingham the amazing place that we are all proud to call home. We all have a different story, a different heritage, a different journey that has brought us here. All of these tales - the inspiring and joyous as well as the challenging and the grim – are part of the Birmingham story. They all need to be shared, explored and commemorated appropriately, because they are the foundation upon which we are all building our shared home and common future as citizens of Birmingham today.

This Strategy and Action Plan sets out how we intend to make these commitments a reality. It has been shaped by extensive conversations and dialogue with communities and partners – so it is a genuine joint effort and enterprise. It will also continue to evolve as we work to challenge and remove these deep-rooted inequalities from our city's economic and social life.

I know that not everyone's lives are directly affected by inequality – but its continued existence corrodes our society in ways that hurt us all. That's why we have to seize this moment. Building a fairer city really is everyone's battle, and everyone's business.

Councillor John Cotton

Cabinet Member - Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities

Executive Summary

Birmingham aspires to be a city that works for everyone – a place where every citizen can share in our economic success and play a full and active part in our society, regardless of their social class, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or belief or a combination of these identities.

If we fail to tackle the inequalities and injustices that still afflict the daily lives of many of our fellow citizens, we don't just limit their life chances – we damage the future potential and cohesion of Birmingham as a whole. That's why tackling inequality has to be everyone's battle and everyone's business.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brutally exposed many of the injustices that disfigure our economy and society. But these injustices are not new; they were present well before the virus changed our lives. The pandemic has merely deepened them, yet again showing how for too many people, opportunities are closed off because of their race, their class, their gender, their disability – or a combination of these factors. This has never been acceptable to the City Council. As we look to the post COVID-19 world, we know that building back better is not enough on its own. We have to build back fairer, too.

This strategy sets out how we intend to do this, with a clear focus on taking action to address the long-term entrenched inequalities in our city. It is rooted in the lived experiences of our citizens and acknowledges that the change we need cannot be delivered by one agency, sector or community alone. We need a genuine, collective effort to remove the structural barriers that obstruct equal access to opportunities in education, housing, employment and health.

This document builds upon the solid foundations laid by the work to deliver the Council's existing Community Cohesion strategy and our five Equality Objectives. It draws upon a rich array of diverse voices and perspectives: the impact of the pandemic; the injustices raised by Black Lives Matter and other movements calling for class, gender and race equality; and the feedback we have received from our citizens, our voluntary and community organisations, community activists, public and private

sector partners on our original Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business Statement of Intent.

The forthcoming Commonwealth Games also presents a great opportunity to further foster inclusion and social justice. Equality and cohesion will be embedded into our Commonwealth Games delivery plan and form an integral part of the Games' legacy to Birmingham. We will ensure that the voices of our communities are also at the heart of these plans.

Our Key Principles for Tackling Inequalities

We have identified five key principles -informed by the feedback from our consultation and supported by research -to guide our work on tackling structural inequalities:

1. A focus on equity

Evidence shows that offering the same opportunities to everyone will not always lead to equal outcomes. This is because factors such as where you were born, your gender, your ethnicity, your sexual orientation and your social class can all limit choice and access to opportunities, thus creating unequal outcomes. Focussing on equity will turn the spotlight on the hidden barriers to accessing opportunities.

2. Actively listening to the voices of lived experience

We will put those who are affected by inequalities at the heart of designing solutions. Policies and practice must reflect and respond to the experiences and needs of our diverse communities. This means actively listening to and engaging with citizens to understand their lived experiences of inequality and using their experience to deliver change.

3. Understand the diverse range of views and perspectives of citizens and ensure solutions are based on the widest available evidence.

We will take an intersectional approach to understand how people experience inequality according to their social class, age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. This means looking at the multiple disadvantages faced by different groups of people and using the latest data and research to underpin policy development and service design.

4. Language counts

Language can itself be a barrier to meaningful engagement. The way we communicate plans, policies and strategies is often seen as jargonistic. We will aim to use plain language in our publications that is jargon free and easily understood.

We also need to develop a shared understanding of the terms used to describe inequalities. We will work across the Council and with our partners in all sectors to achieve this. data.

These key principles build upon and strengthen the City Council's previously agreed Equality Objectives. Taken together, they provide a robust framework for delivering

5. Place matters

Where you are born and where you live shapes your life chances and your access to opportunities. Neighbourhoods are places where individuals build a sense of belonging and make social connections providing access education, employment and training opportunities. This is why we will focus on place-based approaches that improve access to opportunities.

equality and inclusion in everything that we do.

A living strategy and action plan

We have looked at the evidence and listened to our citizens and partners. Their views have shaped our ambitious goal to create a city of equality where every citizen can

thrive. This ambition is underpinned by a set of refreshed practical actions, together with strong governance structures to track progress and ensure accountability.

Birmingham is an ever-changing place – and our plans need to reflect this fact. Therefore, this Strategy will be a living document – one that will be continually updated, so that we respond to changes in the profile of our population, to the latest developments in national and local policy and draws upon the practical experience of partners and communities in delivering meaningful change.

Section 1: Introduction

Birmingham is an incredibly diverse and vibrant city, with a rich and varied cultural heritage. It is home to 1.15 million people, drawn from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, with roots in more than 200 countries from around the world. This rich diversity of people, talent, arts and culture will form the backdrop to the 2022 Commonwealth Games and put Birmingham's story on the global stage.

Our city has a proud history of civic action, with citizens from many different communities coming together to tackle social injustices, build great institutions and businesses and change lives for the better. This unshakeable spirit had again shown itself during the COVID-19 pandemic, with community groups, voluntary and faith organisations, businesses and active citizens across the city uniting to provide vital support to those at most risk.

The pandemic has also reminded us how our social security system and other public services are the essential foundation of strong, equitable communities. In the current storm, they have been a vital lifeline. Now, as we move into the recovery phase, we must work with our partners and communities to strengthen our services and ensure that we not only address the symptoms but tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality. This means we need concerted action to ensure basic entitlements to decent housing, education, employment and health are accessible to all.

This strategy sets out how we will work together with communities and our partners in the public, private and community sectors to tackle deep seated structural inequalities: the barriers and discrimination that stand in the way of many of our fellow citizens.

What is Structural Inequality?

Inequalities are deeply embedded in our society and an individual's experience of inequalities can last throughout their life. Their access to opportunities in education, housing, employment and health is often determined by structural barriers, such as wage gaps, unaffordable housing, lack of diverse representation within organisations and political participation.

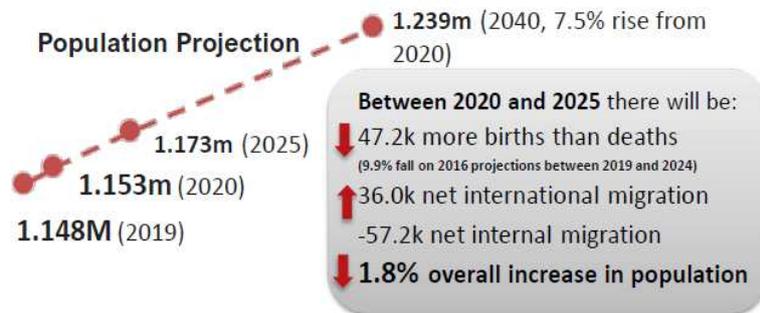
In September 2020, the council published the *Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business – Tackling Inequalities* Statement of Intent for consultation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on travel and social distancing measures, we were unable to undertake the usual consultations through face to face meetings in community settings. Despite these limitations, we held an extensive consultation exercise during two national lockdowns. This included a series of virtual engagement sessions, an online survey, community radio phone-ins for the digitally excluded, a special social media campaign targeted at young people and listening sessions with staff. We also received written feedback. The evidence came from citizens, community activists, a diverse range of voluntary and community sector organisations, council employees, and the public and private sector. Over 4000 people shared their views during the consultation period.

Many respondents gave detailed comments and suggestions on specific issues, including the disproportionate impact of COVID-19, and examples of community projects that were delivering real change in local areas. These insights have been invaluable in shaping this strategy and actions.

In addition, we looked at the available research and data, as well as engaging with leading academic experts who shared their research across a range of topics. We also drew upon the Council's own evaluation of the equalities impact of COVID-19 on Birmingham.

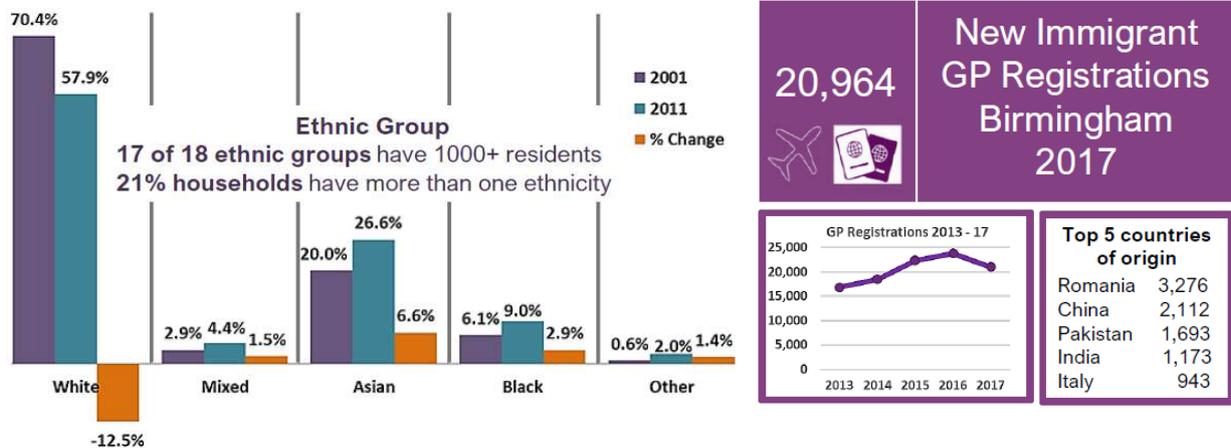
The feedback from the consultations, together with the extensive data and evidence about our population and the patterns of inequality in our city has shaped our approach and action plan.

Our Population



Sources: Population: ONS Population Projections 2018; Households: 2018 based Household Projections, DCLG (2019)

Over the last decade we have become one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country. The 2011 Census of population estimates 46.7% of the population belong to an ethnic group that is not White British. This is up from 34.4% in 2001: an increase of 12.3%. Since 2010, the number of older people has increased by 13% in Birmingham, from 138,000 in 2010, compared with 149,400 in 2018. The 2018 population projections suggest that by 2029 there will be 9,200 over 90's compared with 8,000 in 2019: an increase of 16.2%.



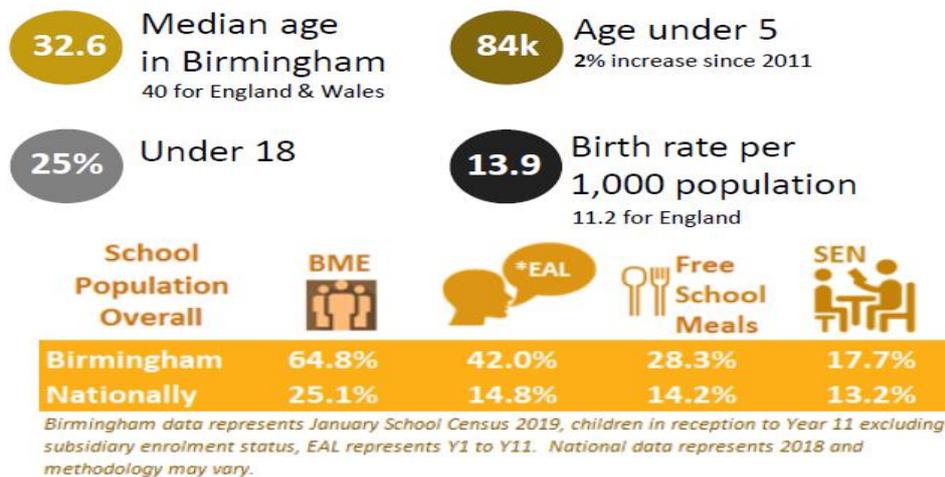
Sources: GP Registrations: National Health Applications and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS), NHS Digital from BCC Public Health; Ethnic Groups in Birmingham, ONS Census 2011

According to the annual Birmingham Economic Review (2020), Birmingham is “one of the youngest major cities in Europe”. In 2019, under 25's accounted for 37.5% (428,590) of Birmingham's total population.¹ In addition, ONS mid-2019 population

¹ Birmingham Economic Review 2020 Chapter 3: Labour Market Challenges: Pre and Post- Pandemic

estimates state that the median age is 32.6 years, while the average for England and Wales is 40.²

Birmingham's population is made up of 50.5% females and 49.5% males.



ONS data suggests there has been an increase in the proportion of people identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual in the West Midlands and nationally. It is estimated that this has increased from 1.3% in 2014 to 2.3% in 2018 in the West Midlands, compared to 1.6% in 2014 and 2.3% in 2018 in the UK.³

² [Analysis of Population Estimates Tool](#), Source: Office for National Statistics © Crown copyright 2020

³ [Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK](#), ONS, March 2020

Section 2: The scale of inequalities and why we need to act

Pre-COVID-19, many individuals and families were already living with financial hardship and insecurity. The financial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic will have swept many of them into even deeper poverty.

There also is clear evidence of the disproportionate impact of poverty, with women, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and those with disabilities all facing a higher likelihood of living in poverty.

The facts about inequality in our city are stark and challenging:

- Birmingham has high levels of deprivation with 40% of the population living in the 10% most deprived areas of England.
- According to figures published by the End Poverty Campaign, in 2018/19, 41.6% of our children were growing up in poverty. It was also reported that three Birmingham constituencies have over 50% of children in poverty. These were:
 - Ladywood with 54.5% of children in poverty, an increase of 12.7% since 2014/15,
 - Hodge Hill with 53.8%, an increase of 13.4% since 2014/15.
 - Hall Green with 52.5%, an increase of 8.8% since 2014/15⁴.
- Birmingham's life expectancy is lower than the national average for both men and women. There is a nine year difference in the life expectancy of people who live in deprived communities and those from more affluent areas "deprived wards have higher ethnic minority populations in the City" [Birmingham and Solihull CCG, 2019]
- Working-class individuals are also more likely to be on low incomes, earning 24 per cent less than those from professional backgrounds. However, even when those from working-class backgrounds enter professional occupations, their pay is, on average, 17 per cent less than their middle-and upper-class colleagues.⁵

⁴ [Local child poverty indicators 2018/19 – estimates of rates, after housing costs dataset \(Oct 2020\)](#)

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798687/SMC_State_of_Nation_2018-19_Summary.pdf

- 130% of Birmingham citizens reported that their household income had fallen since the start of lockdown. The impact is being felt most acutely by younger workers, with over one in five 16 to 24-years-olds out of work.
- The charity YoungMinds, recorded a huge increase in demand for its services. During 2020, the number of calls from parents to its helpline, concerned about a young person experiencing anxiety and suicidal thoughts, increased by 43% over the last twelve months⁶.
- Over 3 in 10 disabled people live in poverty compared to only 2 in 10 non-disabled people.⁷
- In the 2011 Census, 98,181 citizens reported a disability or long-term health problem that limited their day-to-day activities a lot, and a further 99,720 reported a similar condition that limited these activities a little.
- 45% of single parents, the vast majority (90%) of which are women, are living in poverty (Department of Works and Pension data, 2016/17).
- Many of the issues such as poverty, low pay and skills, mental health and homelessness - continue to disproportionately affect women.
- A recent survey of parents revealed in England that children from wealthier households are spending 30% more time each day on educational activities than are children from the poorest household. Better-off students have access to more resources for home learning. ⁸
- Almost one in five LGBT+ people (18%) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.⁹

These statistics are brought to life by many of the real-life stories and experiences that citizens shared with us during the consultation:

- We heard from teachers about some of the pressures families were under trying to home-school children, when there was one digital device shared between a whole family and the skills required to teach were lacking. These families were not equipped to deal with the pandemic.

⁶ <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/reflecting-on-2020-a-message-from-our-chief-executive/>

⁷ www.jrf.org.uk/blog/its-not-right-four-million-disabled-people-are-locked-poverty

⁸ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14848>

⁹ LGBT in Britain – Home and Communities (2018)

- Community organisations are seeing an increase in food poverty. This was a huge concern before the pandemic, but the impact of COVID-19 on jobs meant a greater dependency on food banks. “It is getting harder and harder for families to cope, they feel ashamed going to a foodbank, but they have no choice” (*Community Worker*).
- Participants in the community focus group sessions called for city leaders and policy makers to listen to the ‘stories’ behind the data, so the everyday lived realities of seldom heard voices are better understood, rather than relying on the ‘usual’ community representatives.
- Respondents called for inclusive narratives of Birmingham’s history to build a sense of belonging. These calls to recontextualise our history were provoked by the many conversations ignited by the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees told us of their experiences of discrimination and lack of career progression. “For decades Asian, Minority Ethnic and particularly Black people have been disproportionately disadvantaged at interview, particularly when applying for jobs Grade 5 and above, due to conscious and unconscious bias/prejudice.” (*Council employee, Beheard Online Survey*).
- Young people and their teachers told us that teaching staff, especially at senior positions, need to reflect the diversity of local communities.

These statistics and stories make for uncomfortable reading. Poverty and discrimination limit people’s freedom, leaving them in impossible situations like choosing whether to heat their home or pay their rent. They deprive people of a meaningful choice over where to live, what to eat, how they educate their children and limit career chances and aspirations.

Section 3: Our Approach: Tackling Inequalities in Birmingham – Everyone’s Battle Everyone’s Business

We want Birmingham to be a city of opportunity where everyone, whatever their background, can aspire, achieve and thrive. Where they live, who they are or where they are from must never be a barrier.

The only way to make this happen is to embed the principles of equity, inclusion and human rights at the heart of everything we do. Tackling structural inequalities must be at the heart of our values, our plans and our decision-making. It really is everyone’s battle and everyone’s business.

Prior to the pandemic, we were working to deliver our community cohesion strategy and our five equality objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic, together with the global calls for justice from Black Lives Matter and other social justice movements, emphasised the importance of renewing our focus on the root causes of inequality, especially in light of the clear evidence showing the disproportionate impact upon specific communities and individuals.

The Council’s *Everyone’s Battle Everyone’s Business* Statement of Intent was our initial response to these crucial challenges. This set out our proposals to create the conditions to promote equity of opportunity, building on our existing policies and plans to promote equality. Responses to the consultation showed broad support for our proposals, and this Strategy sets out how we will transform them into practical actions and deliver meaningful change.

Building Community Cohesion

In 2018, the Council published Birmingham’s first community cohesion strategy: *Forward Together to Build a Fair and Inclusive City for Everyone*, which outlines a shared vision to promote fairness and equality.

This strategy sets out a city-wide approach to tackling social and economic inequalities. It sets out how the council together with residents, local organisations and

other partners, will draw on expertise and resources to ensure that Birmingham is a place where people from different backgrounds can come together and build better lives for themselves and their communities.

The collective response to the pandemic has shown us that the spirit of cooperation, cohesion and desire to help each other is deeply rooted in Birmingham's many communities and neighbourhoods. We saw first-hand from the many acts of kindness, how at a time of need people from different backgrounds worked tirelessly to support the most vulnerable in our communities affected by COVID-19. This embodies the cohesive and resilient spirit of Birmingham. We will build on this, actively working with our diverse communities and our voluntary and community to co-design policy and programmes to build back fairer.

Our Five Equality Objectives - embedding equalities in everything we do

As a public body, the City Council has a legal duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty Equality Act 2010 to prepare and publish equality objectives every four years and also to ensure individuals and groups of people identifying with one or more of the nine protected characteristics as defined by law are given protection from discrimination.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the council must, in exercising our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- 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.

The duty ensures the council considers how its decisions to advance equality, inclusion and diversity by removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people because of their protected characteristics.

The 'protected characteristics' covered by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation.

In March 2020, Cabinet approved the Council's five Equality Objectives for 2019 – 2023. Each of these objectives will embed our refreshed approach to equality in everything we do in the council as an integral part of our policies, programmes and practice. We will:

1. Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape policy and practice across the Council

It's important that we build our knowledge and understanding of the everyday experiences of our communities, together with local data to inform the right decisions based on sound evidence and research around the needs of our communities.

That is why we will improve our collection and analysis of data and lived experiences to inform council policies, plans and services.

Moreover, we will ensure that the inequality of outcomes arising from being on a low-income is considered alongside the potential impact upon other characteristics.

2. Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership and a clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the City

To take forward our ambitious plans to build in equality and human rights principles requires committed leaders. We will demonstrate leadership on this important work by creating the right structures and processes to embed a culture of equity and inclusion.

3. Involve and enable our diverse communities to play an active role in civic society and put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision-making

We want to increase democratic engagement and promote civic participation of diverse communities in the decision-making processes of the council and wider city leadership structures. Therefore, we will take active steps to engage, listen and learn, especially from those who have traditionally struggled to be heard, so that we create a city where everyone's voice matters. We are also committed to support and build the capacity of our voluntary sector, which is rooted in our communities.

4. Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible, inclusive to individual's needs and respects faith, beliefs and cultural differences

Our policies and services must meet the changing needs of our diverse communities across all our neighbourhoods. How we design and deliver our services needs to consider the faith and cultural identities of our diverse communities, and how these identities intersect across ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation and social class, to deliver culturally informed services.

5. Encourage and build a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equity and inclusion in everything we do

We believe that Birmingham City Council should take a lead as an employer and our goal is to ensure that our workforce properly reflects the communities we serve and be the most fair, inclusive and desirable employer in Birmingham. This means addressing the current imbalance in gender and Black, Asian Minority Ethnic representation across all levels of the organisation. We will work with our staff to create the conditions in which they feel valued, realise their full potential and treated fairly.

Considering what we have learned during this pandemic, we need to ensure our approaches to understanding the equality impacts of our decision-making, service and policy responses are properly considered as part of our equality impact assessments process. These assessments will be informed by data and the views of our residents and partners.

Embedding equality across the Commonwealth Games Legacy

The Commonwealth Games 2022 presents a great opportunity for Birmingham to show all that's great about our city. It also presents an opportunity to involve our

communities to be active participants of the Games and shaping its legacy. The Council believes that the cross-cutting thread of the Commonwealth Games legacy programme should be to drive out inequalities and provide opportunities for citizens regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, faith, disability, or social class. We will ensure that the voices of our communities will be at the heart of our delivery plan.

Section 4: Key Principles to address structural barriers

Tackling inequalities is complex and requires a deep understanding of the interconnected nature of the structures that create inequalities, and that we listen to the lived experience of different groups. Our refreshed approach is underpinned by five key principles which will guide all our work. These principles have been informed by the feedback from our consultation and supported by research into how to tackle structural inequalities undertaken by the Resolution Foundation and UCL¹⁰.

1. Focus on Equity

Our approach to tackle deep seated inequalities will focus on equity. Historically, we placed an emphasis on equality, which is about giving everyone the exact same resources, level of support and opportunity. However, equity is giving resources based on needs of the individuals.

Different people will have varying needs of support, because where you are born, your social class, your race, your gender, your sexual orientation and disability determine whether you are more likely to face direct and indirect barriers in society. If you have a combination of these protected characteristics, the barriers multiply. That is why offering the same opportunities to everyone will not always lead to equal outcomes.

Our consultation findings revealed that some respondents called for merit-based career progression and access to development opportunities. On the surface, merit sounds fair. However, the idea of merit presumes we all have the same opportunities to succeed and takes no account of the fact that we do not all share the same starting point in life. The school you attend, your parents, where you live, the circumstances of your birth, where you have access to additional support, are all factors that determine how you progress through life.

There is also a body of evidence that suggests significant pay differences across different social backgrounds. A study called the 'Class Ceiling' revealed that those from working class backgrounds earn significantly less than their more privileged peers. The wage gap widens for working class people from Black, Asian and disabled backgrounds. That's why Birmingham has made a commitment to take positive action measures to support equitable career progression, as well as annually publishing a race pay gap. Similarly, we will publish our gender and disability pay gaps.

¹⁰ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/grand-challenges/sites/grand-challenges/files/structurally-unsound-report.pdf>

2. Actively listen to the voices of lived experience

Those who are affected by inequalities should be at the heart of designing solutions – they should be around the decision-making table, reflecting the fact that we can only change the structure of society by changing who designs it’.

It was clear from the consultation that we don’t have a sufficiently strategic approach to community engagement. Consultation fatigue and lack of feedback have become all too familiar terms expressed by communities. We need to work with community-based organisations to design inclusive ways that engage seldom heard voices and then maintaining the dialogue.

3. Understand the diverse range of views and perspectives of citizens and ensure solutions are based on the widest available evidence.

We will take an intersectional approach to understand how people experience inequality according to their social class, age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. This means looking at the multiple disadvantages faced by different groups of people. No one is just working-class, just a disabled person or just a Black person. We all have multiple overlapping identities that determine how inequality is experienced.

To develop a better understanding of the overlapping inequalities, researchers and policymakers should collect and analyse data that is broken down into smaller populations. This will develop a deeper knowledge on how an individual’s outcome is affected by multiple factors such as disability, ethnicity and gender.

Furthermore, sharing data between council teams and other public sector organisations will build an in-depth understanding of the cross-cutting experiences of inequalities.

Our changing populations means data needs to be continuously updated. Having proper systems to collect and analyse both statistics and lived experience will help identify gaps and patterns of new inequalities. For example, data on LGBT+ people and the lived experience of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, refugees and asylum seekers is lacking.

4. Language counts

We will adopt a common shared language when discussing inequalities and use plain language across our publications.

A consistent approach to how we define terms and use language is crucial. Language can itself be a barrier and a form of disadvantage and this was a recurring theme of the consultation feedback. The language used in written and verbal communication of plans, policies and strategies is sometimes perceived as jargonistic, “council speak” or “posh”.

Community activists told us that policymakers do not always speak the same language as communities when discussing inequalities. This in itself acts as a barrier. Engagement with diverse communities will enhance our understanding and knowledge of the language that describes how disadvantages are experienced and defined, and how they develop over the course of a lifetime.

We also a common understanding of the different terms to discuss inequalities. Equally, work is required across professional disciplines and sectors to ensure data collection is “future-proofed”, so that there is access to continuous, comparable data.

The categorisation of ethnic minorities as ‘BAME’ was another recurring theme of our consultation. We heard from staff, residents and voluntary and community organisations that the term ‘BAME’ groups together ethnic groups with different and distinct cultures, identities and experience of inequalities. While this grouping under BAME/Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic can help with data collection and analysis, the differences need to be acknowledged and understood.

“Not to include Black and Asian as the same, differences in history, race, cultural lifestyle and behaviours.” (*BeHeard Survey respondent*).

Respondents commonly used the term working class to refer to low-income White people and perceived it to be a solely White British identity. If we take the common definition of working class as being those on low incomes or in manual jobs, then it clearly does include many people from ethnic minorities. There are shared experiences across working-class people of all ages and ethnicities and it is important that we reflect and amplify these.

5. Place matters

Focus needs to be on place-based approaches. Where we are born and live, shapes our life chances. Our neighbourhoods are places where we build a sense of belonging, make social connections and access opportunities in employment and training, arts and culture.

Communities continue to express concerns over the quality of life in localities, including issues such as the local environment, community safety and the reduction in the provision of public services.

“Mums are telling us they have nowhere safe for their children to play, there’s needles everywhere and gangs fighting, they feel forgotten and nobody cares about their area” (*Community organiser, SMART women CIC*).

The more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy (source: Marmot Review 10 Years on). If you live in a low-income area, then you are more likely to die from COVID-19. Figures published by the Office of National Statistics shows people living in low-income areas are twice as likely to die from the virus.

That is why we must root the design of policy, planning and funding decisions in local areas, and do these things in partnership, together with local people.

Section 5: From Strategy to Action: Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business

This document sets out a refreshed equality action plan to drive forward work across the council to tackle structural inequalities by making it Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business. It complements the wider work of the council to improve the life chances of all its citizens, including the Council Delivery Plan, East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy, Public Health strategies and Working Together in Neighbourhoods.

The actions in the Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business Action Plan can only be successfully delivered by working together, with our partners and communities.

Everyone's Battle Everyone's Business: Tackling Inequalities Action Plan

Equality Objective 1

Understand our diverse communities and embed that understanding in how we shape policy and practice across the Council

Understanding our communities supports better services that respond to the changing needs and priorities of our diverse residents. It's important that we build our knowledge and understanding of the everyday lived experience of our communities together with local data to inform and shape decisions.

We will base our policies, plans and services on sound evidence and research around the needs of our communities, improve the collection and analysis of data and lived experience to inform and shape decisions on different equality groups.

Equality Objective 1: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
We will refresh our existing data collection procedures to align with the Census 2021, but also reflect the changing demographics of the city. We will work with our partners to develop a set of agreed Birmingham data procedures, so we have a consistent approach to how we capture and measure data.	Equality and Cohesion Division	<p>Refresh of protocols, in line with Census 2021 and Birmingham's demographics.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement are conducted on the data protocols with the council and Partners.</p> <p>Data protocols have been agreed and adopted by council.</p> <p>Data protocols adopted by Partner organisations.</p>	October 2021
Deliver workshops to the Council's research and performance functions to develop insights that capture understanding of how personal characteristics and circumstances intersect to disadvantage individuals - gain insight into the 'lived experience' of multiple disadvantages.	Business Improvement and Change & Eq&C	Workshops delivered to all relevant staff. Follow-up workshops to see how knowledge has been applied. Define a set of indicators that can be monitored quarterly to identify improvements.	Ongoing

Equality Objective 1: Actions	Lead Service Area	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	Timeframes
Performance data, research and intelligence to be made available on the Equality Impact Assessment (EIAs) Equality Toolkit to support evidence-led Equality Impact Assessments.	Equality and Cohesion Division	All EIAs to include relevant data as part of the assessment process.	Ongoing
Commission ethnographic research to gain insights into the lived experiences, and the intersecting issues to support evidence-led decisions.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Research undertaken and findings delivered/agreed. Research findings are shared and integrated into the EIA process.	Ongoing
Publish relevant equality information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, under the Equality Act 2010. To support transparent decision-making processes, and accessible to the public.	Human Resources	Equality information is published on the Council Website.	Annually
Publish the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis, that includes 'deep dive' analysis to identify up and coming challenges and multiple disadvantages, so that it is easily accessible to the public.	Public Health	JSNA published on Council website	Annually

Equality Objective 2

Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership and a clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in the city

It's important that the Council leads by example – both politically and managerially. This is key to establishing a strong vision on how the council will advance equality for all and ensuring we deliver on our ambitious plans to embed the principles of equity and human rights across all that we do. We will demonstrate leadership by creating the right structures and processes to embed a culture of equity.

A common commitment and understanding on how to address the structural barriers that lead to inequality will ensure this approach is reflected in corporate reporting, strategic plans and target setting.

Equality Objective 2: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
The Equalities and Cohesion Star Chamber, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities will provide robust internal challenge and scrutiny of the Council's performance against the five Equality Objectives and drive sustained improvements to our internal equalities practice.	Equality and Cohesion Division	<p>Equalities and Cohesion Star Chamber governance and accountability framework and process established.</p> <p>All key decisions to be supported by a quality assured EIA.</p> <p>Recognised as excellent by the LGA Equality Peer Review.</p>	Ongoing
Cabinet Members will call out exclusionary behaviours by declining to participate in any public panels that do not include female and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic representation.		Equalities information and terms of agreement established and included in Member induction packs.	Ongoing

Equality Objective 2: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
		Members undertake training to support identification of inequalities?	
All BCC staff as well as elected Councillors to receive mandatory equalities training.	Organisational Development	A year on year increase in BCC staff and elected councillors attending Equality training.	Annually
Build on the work with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to draw up a Birmingham Employment Charter, in partnership with other public sector agencies, private sector partners and anchor institutions to ensure best practice in diversity and increase recruitment across all sectors from the most excluded communities in the city.	Finance and Governance	Agree a Birmingham Employment Charter. Percentage of employers adopting the Employment Charter.	Ongoing
The Council is reviewing its Social Value Policy and the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility. This will enable tenderers in future to target disadvantaged groups in Birmingham with their social value commitments.	Finance and Governance	Increase in tender applications for diverse disadvantage groups. Monitor percentage of applications awarded / declined and justifications.	ongoing
The Council is working with other large institutions in Birmingham to develop improved ways of commissioning and procurement that provide opportunities for small Voluntary Community Sector to bid.	Finance and Governance	Development of a terms or reference (or sign up to an agreed vision) with institutions to improve commissioning and procurement opportunities for small Voluntary Community Social Enterprises.	August 2021
Establish a corporate forum with the Staff Equality Networks to hold "check and challenge" meetings between Networks, Council Leadership Team and Cabinet.	Organisational Development	Forum established and meetings conducted regularly. Actions fed into the star chamber process.	Ongoing
Establish a corporate Equalities and Cohesion Team that will act as critical friend to support good practise, to oversee the delivery of the equality strategy and community cohesion strategy. The service will work collaboratively within the council, partners	Partnerships, Insight and Prevention	Head of Service recruited, and wider Team currently being recruited.	May 2021

Equality Objective 2: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
organisations and communities to promote equality and inclusion across Birmingham.			
The Birmingham Living Wage Partnership to apply to become a Living Wage City.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Application approved by the Living Wage Foundation. Increase percentage of employers sign up to become a Real Living Wage employer.	By Year End 2021
City board to take an active role in supporting a citywide approach to tackle structural inequalities and shine a light on issues that require a citywide policy response.	Partnerships, Insight and Prevention		Ongoing
The Council will work with the Youth City Board to ensure young people's voices are actively influencing policy decisions.	Education and Skills	Taking forward the findings from consultations conducted with young people.	Ongoing
Work with the Race Code team to undertake a self-assessment of our existing structures, policies, norms and practices to identify race inequalities. The findings of the assessment will help inform a race equity action plan, with a focus on addressing the lack of ethnic minority diversity at senior levels of the Council.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Findings of self-assessment to be integrated across governance structures, plans and policies. Increase in % of the Council's Senior management from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, in line with the diversity of the city's working age population.	June 2021 Year on Year improvement
Develop a community engagement and participation framework to support officers and elected members engage with diverse civil society organisations and underrepresented and 'unheard' voices.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Community engagement and participation framework established.	July 2021
Deliver equality impact assessment training to all senior managers on how to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Training delivered to all senior managers.	Ongoing

Equality Objective 2: Actions	Lead Service Area	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	Timeframes
		All service and policy decisions are supported with a quality assured Equality Impact Assessment.	
The Council to include health inequalities impact assessment as part of the equality impact assessment.		Equality Impact Assessment process revised to incorporate health inequalities impact.	May 2021

Equality Objective 3

Involve and enable our diverse communities to play an active role in civic society and put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision-making

We want to increase democratic engagement and promote civic participation of diverse communities in the decision-making processes of the council and wider City leadership structures.

We will take active steps to engage, listen and learn, especially from those who have traditionally struggled to be heard.

Equality Objective 3: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
Establish the second phase of the Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission, to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience of poverty have a direct influence upon how we deliver our services and make policy.	Public Health	Second phase of the Birmingham Poverty Truth Commission established Completion of each phase of the commission process to agreed timescales. Production of a set of tangible recommendations to shape policy and systems.	2022
Develop an inclusive citizen engagement model to ensure that the city's diverse communities are fully represented, including those that often struggle to get a hearing. This will enable us to work with communities to properly understand the different	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Inclusive citizen engagement model established Increased participation of traditionally seldom heard voices.	July 2021

Equality Objective 3: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
experiences of inequalities and together, decide the immediate and longer-term measures needed to address them.			
Develop phase two of our Birmingham City Council Civic Leadership programme with Operation Black Vote. We will continue and expand our work with Operation Black Vote to invest in, enable and grow a new generation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic civic leaders.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic civic leaders (via Operation Black Vote)	By Year End 2021
Continue to progress and develop the Council's cross - Directorate "Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods" policy to ensure: community and neighbourhood organisations representing diverse communities can be properly heard and influence decision-making; that internal and external funding sources not directly available to the Council are levered in and focussed upon supporting grassroots community development, capacity building, post-Covid community recovery and strengthening civil society.	Neighbourhoods	Revision of the Working Together in Neighbourhoods policy	Ongoing
We will hold a proper conversation on the term 'BAME' with our employees, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, voluntary and community organisations and academics. We acknowledge that language can be structural barrier, grouping together ethnic minorities does not help distinguish between the different experiences of disadvantage/advantage and outcomes.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Consultation and engagement with employees and communities. Findings communicated and reflected accordingly in performance and insight information that is produced	Autumn 2021
Establish a Gypsy Roma Traveller partnership to develop a better understanding of the needs of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Establish a cross agency Gypsy Roma Traveller partnership.	June 2021

Equality Objective 3: Actions	Lead Service Area	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	Timeframes
Work with GRT communities, voluntary and community sector and public sector agencies to find policy solutions that respond to differing needs.			
We will establish a community panel to provide community oversight of the Commonwealth Games legacy programme.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Establish community panel with diverse perspectives	June 2021

Equality Objective 4

Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible and inclusive to individual's needs and respects faith, beliefs and cultural differences

Our policies and services must meet the changing needs of our diverse communities across all our neighbourhoods. We need to build a strong understanding of these needs, so that we target support and resources effectively.

How we design and deliver our services needs to consider the faith and cultural identities of our diverse communities, and how these identities intersect across race, gender socioeconomic backgrounds, to deliver culturally informed services.

Equality Objective 4: Actions	Lead Service Area	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	Timeframes
Review and refresh the Council's Faith Covenant to ensure that we work with and give a voice to our ever more diverse family of faith communities in the city.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Published refreshed Faith Covenant.	Autumn 2021
Establish a formal body to oversee the work of the Covenant and our relationship with faith groups.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Faith Partnership established with a clear set of terms of reference and standards	Autumn 2021
Deliver the joint review with London Borough of Lewisham on African and Caribbean health inequalities.	Public Health	Joint review conducted. Publication of review.	Autumn 2021

Equality Objective 4: Actions	Lead Service Area	<i>How will we measure success?</i>	Timeframes
Publish evaluation of review to inform further reviews into the health inequalities affecting other Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities.			
<p>Deliver interactive sessions to cover the application of the Equality Act 2010 within a dynamic education context. This will challenge participants to look beyond the legislation and reflect on the quality and impact of their practice in their school.</p> <p>Anti-racist sessions with schools to explore what it means to be anti-racist in Britain today and what is involved in offering an anti-racist education to children and young people. This offer aims to move participants beyond simply making statements that support race equality, to ensuring that they act to make the changes needed to move their schools to a position where they are actively anti-racist and uphold social justice.</p>	Education and Skills	Improved understanding of the Equality Act 2010.	Ongoing
Partner with the University of Birmingham’s School of Education to deliver the Anti-Racism in Education programme of activities.	Education and Skills	<p>A re-designed curriculum to include anti-racist practice with a cross-curricular delivery plan</p> <p>Learning from unconscious bias training is applied in practice across participating schools.</p>	December 2021
We will work with schools and local historians to develop a new curriculum and resources that tell the “Birmingham Story” – fully exploring its diversity, challenges and its meaning for the Birmingham of the 2020s and beyond.	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Creation of the ‘Birmingham Story’ curriculum and supporting resources.	July 2022
Plan with our communities and partner organisations a programme of cultural, faith and other key significant events	Equalities and Cohesion Division	A calendar of programmed events established.	Ongoing

Equality Objective 4: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
which will be celebrated and commemorated to build community cohesion and bring different groups together.			
Engage with communities to review the appropriateness of local monuments and statues on public land and council property. We will also ensure that the plaques accompanying our monuments properly and fully explain their historical context, where appropriate.	Cultural Development Service	Register developed on all monuments and statues on public land and council property Review undertaken on appropriateness of monuments and statues.	May to Sept 2021
We will review our street and public space naming protocols to ensure that potential names properly reflect and respect the city's history and communities, together with our wider Heritage Strategy.	Transport & Connectivity	Refreshed Street Naming Policy which enables a wider range of names reflecting diverse themes to be introduced Consideration of street names for inclusion on a pre-approved list reflecting Birmingham's diverse culture	June 2021 Dec 2021
The Cultural Development Service will refresh Birmingham's Heritage Strategy in consultation with communities to reflect on the contribution from of all our communities in telling the Birmingham story and setting out our ambitions going forward.	Cultural Development Service	Consultation and engagement with communities on the refresh of Birmingham's Heritage Strategy. Refreshed Birmingham's Heritage Strategy published.	November 2021
We will review the displays of art in our civic buildings to ensure they also tell the full story of Birmingham, including the renaming of a room in the Council House to properly mark the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic civic leaders.	Cultural Development Service	Review undertaken on all art in civic buildings A room renamed in the Council House to mark the contributions of Birmingham's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic civic leaders.	Spring 2022

Equality Objective 4: Actions	Lead Service Area	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
Together with local communities establish an interconnected network of heritage trails that navigate through Birmingham's history, shaped through honest and diverse stories of settlement. This will include steps to properly champion the telling of "unheard histories" with communities defining their own narrative of place	Equalities and Cohesion Division	Network of heritage trails established.	June 2022
Library of Birmingham is partnering with a community heritage organisation to curate an exhibition about Birmingham schools in the 1970s and 1980s and how they contributed to an emerging understanding of multicultural education.	Library of Birmingham	Exhibition is held	July – September 2021
Spaces of Becoming: Black British Material Culture. The Council is collaborating with Vanley Burke, the Royal College of Art, and local/national cultural partners: Birmingham Museums and the Black Curriculum to share our story of different patterns of migration, inspired by the Vanley Burke photographic archive. This exhibition will be complemented by a community conference and engagement activities at local Birmingham libraries.	Library of Birmingham	Community Conference held. Engagement across local libraries completed. Engagement activities completed.	November – February 2022
From City of Empire to City of Diversity project. The Library of Birmingham will collaborate on a project led by Sampad with support from the University of Birmingham. Inspired by the Library's Dyche photographic collection, the project will work with communities to catalogue, reinterpret and re-present a historically unique cultural collection.	Library of Birmingham	Ask for the outputs. Catalogue completed in consultation with communities Catalogue of stories published and shared widely	March – June 2022
The <i>Everything to Everybody</i> Shakespeare project is a multilingual celebration of Birmingham, Brummies' and their Shakespeare, will deliver a series of community co-curated exhibitions at Library of Birmingham, family engagement days, collections workshops, a series of neighbourhood productions and projects in locations around the city, a 15 venue tour of Birmingham's First Folio.	Library of Birmingham	community co-curated exhibitions at Library of Birmingham delivered 15 venue tour completed	July – November 2022

Equality Objective 5

Encourage and build a skilled and diverse workforce to build a culture of equity and inclusion in everything we do.

We believe that Birmingham City Council should lead by example as an employer. Our goal is to ensure that our workforce properly reflects the communities we serve and that we are the fairest, most inclusive and desirable employer to work for in Birmingham. This means addressing the current imbalance in gender and Black Asian minority representation across all levels of the organisation. We will work with our staff to create the conditions in which they feel valued, fairly treated and supported to realise their full potential.

Equality Objective 5: Actions	Responsible Lead	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
Work with independent ethnographic experts, staff networks and our trade union colleagues to undertake a root and branch review of our HR policies, procedures, training and other related activity so that we are assured that we are best in class when it comes to equal employment practice and support.	Human Resources	Revision of HR policies, procedures and training. BCC recognised as one of the top 100 employers on the stonewall index.	Ongoing
We will develop a Race Equity Plan to set our actions across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and selection Career Development Culture Change Rebuilding Trust Improving data: reduce non-disclosure rates of personal data Reduce the proportion of 'unknown' equality data we hold on our employees. 	Human Resources	Regular updates on progress to the Equality and Cohesion Star Chamber Measure progress against 2020 baseline data Publish annual progress report Reduction in the percentage of 'unknown' equality data	Ongoing
Publish and annual ethnicity pay gap report, supported by actions to promote diversity at all levels of our workforce.	Human Resources	Annual publication of an ethnicity pay gap report to identify progress.	Annually

Equality Objective 5: Actions	Responsible Lead	How will we measure success?	Timeframes
Set robust diversity targets for the Chief Executive and Council Leadership Team, which will form part of the Council's Performance Monitoring framework.	Human Resources	Publish progress against set target	Six-monthly
Publish a Gender Pay Gap report, supported by actions to close pay gaps and promote gender equity.	Human Resources	Gender Pay Gap report published and reported as part of the performance monitoring framework.	Annually
We will look at the level of disproportionality of grievances, disciplinaries and dismissals across ethnicity, gender, disability and sexuality	Human Resources	Publish data. Regular updates on progress to reduce grievances, disciplinaries and dismissals	Annually
Undertake the first Disability Pay Gap analysis, supported by actions to close pay gaps and promote gender equity.	Human Resources	Publish council's first Disability Pay Gap report	December 2021
Participate in the Stonewall workplace Index for LGBT+ people to make us a truly inclusive employer that values our LGBT staff. We will work with Stonewall and our LGBT staff network to improve disclosures.	Equality and Cohesion Division	BCC recognised as one of the top 100 employers on the stonewall index.	June 2021
The chief executive's weekly staff bulletin should routinely reinforce the council's commitment to equalities and the councils zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment. Share examples of good organisational practice that promotes equalities.	Communications	Clear work programme with dates established for inclusion of equalities updates in the chief executives' bulletins	Ongoing
Take part in national benchmarking diversity schemes. Work towards achieving the national Disability Confident Employer scheme at Level 2.	Equality and Cohesion Division	Level 2 of the national Disability Confident Employer achieved	December 2021

Glossary of Terms

Age – Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Diversity — Diversity is defined as individual differences between groups based on such things as:

- abilities
- age
- disability
- learning styles
- life experiences
- neurodiversity
- race/ethnicity
- class
- gender
- sexual orientation
- country of origin
- cultural, political or religious affiliation
- any other difference

Direct Discrimination

This refers to less favourable treatment against an individual because of that person's protected characteristic.

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Equality

Treating everyone the same way assuming that everyone starts out on an equal footing with equal opportunities.

Equity

Working toward fair outcomes for individuals or groups by treating them in ways that address their unique barriers.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment is a formal structured approach to assessing the impact of proposed policies or practices on people with different protected characteristics. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves giving open-minded and rigorous consideration to the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This includes understanding the potential effects of the organisation's activities on different people, but there is no prescribed process for doing this. In order to comply with the general Equality Duty, public authorities must gather information about who is going to be affected by a decision, policy or practice; ensure that they have sufficient information; consider the nature, extent and duration of any adverse impact and if there is a greater negative impact on one protected group compared to another then they must consider whether the adverse impact can be removed or mitigated.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is broader than race and has usually been used to refer to long shared cultural experiences, religious practices, traditions, ancestry, language, dialect or national origins (for example, African-Caribbean, Indian, Irish).

Ethnographic Research

Ethnographic research is study looking into the social interactions of individuals within their communities. This research provides an in-depth insight into the individuals views and actions, how they see and experience the world.

Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. They ensure people can live freely and that they are able to flourish, reach their potential and participate in society. They ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. You have human rights simply because you are human, and they cannot be taken away.

Indirect discrimination

This is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and this is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Intersectionality

Having multiple identities that intersect like race, gender, disability and sexual orientation, which can disadvantage

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples in a wide range of circumstances, such as employment, education, service provision and housing. Failure to do so would amount to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Positive Action

Lawful actions that seeks to overcome or minimise disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs (e.g. providing mentoring to encourage staff from under-represented groups to apply for promotion).

Race

Race and ethnicity are commonly used and are often used interchangeably. However, they evolved in different ways and do not hold the same meaning (although there is overlap). Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

It's now widely accepted that race is a social construct. However, having been racialised and shared common experiences of racism, racial identity is important to

many and can be a basis for collective organising and support for racially minoritised individuals.

Religion or belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex (Formerly referred to as gender)

Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, femininity and masculinity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic relating to a person's sexual orientation towards people of:

1. The same sex as him or her (the person is a gay man or a lesbian).
2. The opposite sex from him or her (the person is heterosexual).
3. Both sexes (the person is bisexual).

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and / or gender expression differs from their birth sex. They may or may not seek to undergo gender reassignment, including hormonal treatment and/or surgery. Often used interchangeably with 'trans'.