

Shropshire Council

Annual Service User Diversity Report 2019 to 2020

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A. Introduction

1. Our county and its people

If you are looking for Shropshire on a map of the United Kingdom, you will need to look to the middle of England on the map, and then to the far west of Birmingham, just next to the middle of Wales. For our communities and businesses, travel to work patterns across our porous borders indicate large numbers travelling for work to the West Midlands, to the South and East, and North and North West, to Cheshire, Staffordshire and Manchester and beyond, as well as into Wales.

It is within this geographical context of cross border travel patterns, for residents, visitors, and businesses, that we develop and deliver services with and for our diverse communities. The exigencies of adjusting to external factors of climate change, political change, and the upheaval caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are allied to the challenges of preserving and maximising our natural capital.

These external factors provide further context to our local strategic and collaborative approaches, which continue to be towards meeting rural and community needs, and in so doing achieving economic stability and growth.

Shropshire is the second largest inland rural county in England, and one of the most sparsely populated. Shropshire is approximately ten times the size of all the Inner London Boroughs put together (31,929 hectares; source: ONS Census 2011), with just one person per hectare (1.01 persons; 323,136 population; source: ONS mid year estimates 2019), for a terrain covering 319,736 hectares.

Around 42.8% of Shropshire's population lives in rural areas. There are 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, and Shrewsbury, the central county town. An additional dynamic is that, unlike for example Cumbria, the population is dispersed across the entire county rather than there being any areas where no one lives at all.

Being an inland county brings its own challenges. There is a dependency on a limited number of key arterial transport routes, for trade and supply including freight through the county to Wales and Ireland, or up to the North West, as well as for everyday transport for local communities and businesses. It is also quite literally exposed to extreme weather conditions, with roads that are liable to flooding, and a lack of viable alternatives leading to congestion and lengthy diversions.

The physical terrain poses practical challenges for digital and physical infrastructure, as well as the high service delivery costs and access issues associated with a dispersed and ageing population. At 21.4%, the percentage of the population aged 65-84 is significantly higher than the England average of 15.9%.

Our collegiate approach is to collect and share evidence about community needs and how we are tackling them, with other local authorities, through channels such as the County Councils Network (CCN) and the Rural Services Network (RSN) We submit responses through these channels, to Parliamentary Select Committees, as well as directly to Government.

For example, we made a contribution this year to a CCN report on the decline of local bus services, in which we commented that:

“One of the single most significant factors that has impacted negatively on public transport funding in rural areas, over the last few years, has been the underfunding of the concessionary fares scheme, a subject of recent LGA analysis. This funding otherwise could have been spent on the public transport networks and the respective infrastructure.”

This report about local bus services has just been published (December 2020) and forms a timely addition to national evidence bases to better inform and shape national policy development in this regard, whilst transport colleagues have also taken part in round table discussions along with Cornwall, with members of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee..

An emphasis on inequalities within society and within communities, including access to decent and energy efficient housing, healthcare, education and employment, whether by public or private transport or via digital means, should also include better national recognition of geographical and societal interdependencies rather than a separation out of different strands of policy.

If the pandemic has shown us anything, it is that we are more dependent upon each other and more vulnerable to a greater range of factors than could perhaps have been imagined. A reflection on this genuinely universal truth, and a collective and cohesive approach towards the structures that we use to develop and deliver public sector services, should bring in an improvement in social mobility opportunities across the whole country, alongside environmental initiatives around green energy, longer term use of homeworking alongside reduced physical travel and greater recognition of hitherto hidden deprivation and dependencies.

Whilst Shropshire remains a relatively affluent location, albeit with pockets of deprivation, in terms of access to services, it is amongst the most deprived localities in the country. This is measured through the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019), which was released on 26th September 2019. This updates the IMD2015.

The IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Layer Super Output Areas or LLSOAs) in England. LLSOAs are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for the Census. They are areas consisting of a minimum of 1,000 to a maximum of 3000 population. There are, in all 39 separate indicators spread across 7 distinct domains of deprivation, which are weighted and combined to calculate the overall index of deprivation (IMD).

This is an overall measure of deprivation experienced by people living in an area and is calculated for every LLSOA in England. All LLSOAs are then ranked according to their level of deprivation relative to other areas.

The higher the rank the more deprived an area is, so an area with a rank of 100 is more deprived than an area with a rank of 200. The IMD also contains two supplementary indexes Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (IDAOPI)

There is no definitive threshold of deprivation and the IMD measures deprivation on a relative not absolute scale, so a neighbourhood ranked as 100 is more deprived than an area ranked 200, but this doesn't mean that it is twice as deprived. There are 32,844 small areas (LLSOAs) in England with an average population of 1,500, where one is the most deprived and 32,844 the least. In Shropshire there are 193 LLSOAs with an average population of 1645

A snapshot analysis of the IMD2019 has been prepared by the Performance, Intelligence and Insight Team to give an overview of the results for Shropshire. This is available on the Council website. Reports have also been prepared for the Overall IMD and each of the seven Domains.

Shropshire has become slightly more deprived since 2015 with an increase in the average score from 16.7 in 2015 to 17.2 in 2019, an increase of 0.5.

Shropshire is the 174th most deprived local authority in England out of a total of 317 lower tier authorities (rank of average score). This measure shows Shropshire has become relatively more deprived compared to other areas since 2015. Lower tier authorities include non metropolitan districts, London Boroughs, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts. Note in 2015 there were 326 lower tier local authorities whereas there are 317 in 2019.

When looking at the other two main measures of deprivation (rank of average rank and rank of proportion of LLSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally) these show Shropshire has also become slightly more deprived relative to other local authorities since 2015, however the rank is out of 317 authorities and in 2015 the rank was out of 326 authorities.

Compared to 2015, 33 LLSOAs had become more deprived in 2019, 19 had become less deprived and 141 had remained the same. This is a net change of 14 LLSOAs becoming more deprived. The largest net changes can be seen in the Income Domain where there was a net increase of 30 LLSOAs becoming more deprived also in the Barriers to Housing and Services there is a net change of 40 more LLSOAs had become more deprived and in the Income deprivation Affecting Children Sub-Domain there is a net change of 41 LLSOAs becoming more deprived.

In the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Sub-Domain there is a net change of 13 LLSOAs becoming less deprived and in health a net change of 25 LLSOAs becoming less deprived.

Whilst all seven domains help us to consider impacts in equality terms for our communities, it is pertinent from a social inclusion angle to note that the domains include Barriers to Housing and Services, Health Deprivation and Disability, and Income.

We said in our 2018 to 2019 report that further analyses of these would be an area of focus to help us in equality policy development. This was of course before the world changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing these policy areas into sharp focus.

2. The legislative framework in which we continue to operate

The **Equality Act 2010**, together with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, forms a framework of protection for equality, diversity, social inclusion and human rights.

Shropshire Council seeks to ensure that, like other public authorities, it is compliant with the **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**.

This **Duty**, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, may be described as the duty on a public authority, when carrying out its functions, to have what is called *due regard* to three equality aims.

These equality aims are listed below.

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity;
- Fostering good relations.

As a local authority, we must comply with both a general equality duty and with specific duties, as set out in the Act.

- To demonstrate full compliance with the general duty, we are required to publish annual information about our workforce and service user diversity.
- To demonstrate full compliance with the specific duties, we are required to publish one or more equality objectives which we think we should achieve.

The frequency for these objectives to be published is a minimum of every four years.

2020 saw the preparation and publication of our **Equality Objectives Action Plan for 2020 to 2024**, approved by Cabinet on 6th July 2020. This enables positioning of the Council to assist in efforts to meet its PSED, seek to demonstrate good practice in so doing, and facilitate timely links with corporate and national policy and strategy development, not least around endeavours to address health inequalities and to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination.

The regulations also specify that a listed authority must publish its equality information and equality objectives in a manner which is accessible to the public and may publish this information within another published document. Our diversity reports are on the Council website, along with the equality objectives action plans for 2016 to 2020 and for 2020 to 2024. These are in the section on “equality, diversity and social inclusion”, along with further background and complementary information about this policy area.

We have set out our corporate equality actions across the following three areas, and are reporting on them accordingly:

- Publish equality and diversity information more visibly;
- Collect and analyse equality and diversity data more proactively;
- Work jointly with partner organisations on equality-related issues.

The Equality Act describes a number of **Protected Characteristics** groupings ie characteristics that people may share. Local authorities such as ourselves and other public sector organisations are obliged under the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the needs of people in these groupings in our decision making processes. The nine groups are, in alphabetical order:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;

- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

Social inclusion

As in previous years, we are taking a closer look at specific Protected Characteristics in this Annual Service User Diversity Report.

There are nine national Protected Characteristics with regard to groupings of people in the community, as set out under the Equality Act 2010, to which the Council adds a tenth one, around social inclusion

What we mean by this in Shropshire.

The social inclusion category is intended to help the Council to think as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people that may be described as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns.

The grouping explicitly encompasses members of the armed forces, whether serving or veterans; children and young people who are or were looked after by the local authority, including those who have left the care of the local authority and are making their way in the world; and households who for whatever reason are finding life to be difficult.

This may be a rural household, for whom issues as diverse as fuel poverty, loneliness, lack of access to services and facilities and lack of opportunities for training and employment may be affecting their physical and emotional well-being. We know from the evidence we have been gathering towards the production in 2021 of a Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire that loneliness may as easily affect people in one of our market towns, particularly at either end of the age spectrum, despite their being seemingly close to services and social interactions.

3. Things that have changed in 2020

Covid-19 Pandemic

It is timely to refer here to the **equality impacts of the pandemic to date**, as it cuts across groupings in terms of where they live and work in Shropshire.

Looking firstly at the **economic impact**, we have made a submission to the BEIS Select Committee, in September 2020, in which we said the following:

“Market towns support wide swathes of rural hinterland and often contain much of the social infrastructure that supports daily life, including banking, doctors, dentists, libraries, places of worship, and schools, as well as retail and hospitality. They are both drivers of community life and connectors of possibilities and opportunities for

people in rural areas. Ensuring the health and vitality of the rural high street is crucial to those communities.

“The focus in the immediate response phase to Covid-19 has been quite rightly on those sectors hardest hit by lockdown: **retail, hospitality and leisure**. Within the context of market towns and town centres, these sectors are particularly important for employment and also for the viability and vitality of our towns for the future.

“Initiatives like the Future High Streets Fund and Town Deals are welcomed but have so far been too narrowly focused on the more urban and most deprived places – leaving out the market towns serving largely rural and less visibly deprived communities, whilst not recognising the pockets of deprivation within these communities. These towns and rural county areas are going to be key to recovery, particularly when considering latest information and data from towns and cities on recovery, with the smaller more local towns recovering more quickly as people choose to stay/shop local.

“**Manufacturing and supply chains** are also an area of particular concern, as is construction. These are all sectors that have seen a slowdown of production and activity throughout the pandemic. The fear of more larger scale closures and redundancies impacting on the conurbations and supply chain companies in county areas like Shropshire serving them are signs that this sector needs some attention. Support such as business rate reliefs for this sector, specific productivity grant support and packages of support to work with employers on the resilience of their workforce to ensure they are flexible/adaptable for innovation and automation are examples of how Government could assist.

“Whilst **agriculture** is more than five times as important for Shropshire as is the case nationally, another key sector for us is **health and care**, equating to 1 in 7 jobs. This has commensurate implications for not only public transport but also car ownership and the distances that need to be travelled, whether people are carers in a professional or personal capacity or recipients of health and social care services. “This is not a surprise, given an ageing demographic, which also impacts upon succession planning within sectors as well as upon skills acquisition and retention across the piece”.

Turning to **health and well-being impacts**, in our Corporate Equality Objectives Action Plan report to Cabinet in July 2020 we said that:

- 1.6 Members will be aware that national evidence to date has identified a disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for groupings including Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities, faith communities, younger people, older people, people with disabilities, and those for whom there is a gendered economic impact. These groupings all fall within what are termed Protected Characteristic groupings under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.7 Considerations around social inclusion and access to services are also to the forefront of our minds as a large and sparsely populated rural county, as well as in the minds of national policymakers, as the impacts of the pandemic have thrown such inequalities into sharp relief.

1.8 *The Equality Objectives Action Plan accordingly includes proposed actions for joint work to identify and seek to address the inequalities emerging to date across a range of groupings and communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This should then facilitate tie in with national actions in response to a range of groupings affected, as well as to the recommendations made in the Public Health England report “Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups”; PHE, June 2020.”*

As indicated to elected members, the PHE report brought into sharp relief the additional challenges in BAME communities around finding out about and accessing service, in terms of the information and support that we provide, and the ways in which we seek to provide such help. This also brings in joint efforts across our area and work with other neighbouring authorities, public sector organisations, and the voluntary and community sector across our borders. Subsequent PHE reports indicate the necessity of an understanding of the intersectionality of factors at play, including consideration of the representation of BAME populations in the health and social care sector and in key worker jobs, who are therefore more at risk due to additional and prolonged exposure to the virus, and people in intergenerational households where social distancing may be more difficult to achieve.

We have also noted and will draw upon the findings of a rapid review report by Liverpool John Moores University in July 2020, with its conclusions that:

“The evidence reviewed supports expectations that the impacts of COVID-19 have not been felt equally. The pandemic has both exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities in society. Men, older people, those with existing health conditions, ethnic minority communities, so-called ‘low skilled’ workers and those from poorer areas are all at a greater risk of infection, serious illness and of dying from COVID-19.

“As the evidence shows, the unequal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic go further than the direct impacts of the disease itself. The unintended consequences of lockdown, social distancing and other measures designed to control the spread of infection – isolation at home, economic shutdown, school closures and reduced access to services – have had and will continue to have their own unequal impacts on health and wellbeing outcomes.

“As we move from the response phase of the pandemic and into recovery, the direct and wider impacts on individuals, households and communities will influence their capacity to recover. By providing a summary of what the evidence tells us about the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on health and wellbeing, this review aims to assist with the development of priorities and mitigating actions to support recovery”.

Anti Racism Efforts

The following is taken from a Statement made by the Leader of Shropshire Council, Councillor Peter Nutting, ahead of the Cabinet item on the Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2020 to 2024.

“As a Council, we have always been committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce and our local communities. Our goal is to ensure that this commitment is embedded in our day to day working practices with all our customers, colleagues and partners.

“However, the events we have witnessed around the world, highlighted by the senseless death of George Floyd and others, serve as an unwelcome reminder of the racial injustice and inequality in our society today.

“It is therefore timely that I am able to present this paper to you. This is an important document which reflects the fact, current affairs have highlighted the need for us to be aware in our daily operations in particular around discrimination.

“As a result, I’ve been able to personally reflect on our need to drive out discrimination and ensure equality, in this reflection I have reviewed the content of our equality training and have fully endorsed the work of officers and our communities in a commitment to develop our understanding of these issues.

“We recognise that we all have a role to play to bring about positive change by promoting equality, here in Shropshire. We will therefore lead by example and not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any kind.

“This action plan is commended to Members as being integral to the ways which we can make real progress in these endeavours, alongside open dialogue and ongoing engagement with all communities in Shropshire.”

B. Progress across our action areas

1. Local progress 2016 to 2020

The Council sets out to visibly demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in Protected Characteristic groupings and people at risk of social exclusion, and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

The Corporate Equality Objectives Action Plan 2020 to 2024 report to Cabinet for 2020 represents one way of demonstrating our open and transparent approach, since it provided a visible way in which to record and publish progress made in the four year period 2016 to 2020, and through which to set out proposals for meeting the national equality aims during the period 2020 to 2024.

The following is an extract from this report

Over the course of the four year period, progress has been charted using three strands of activity

- Publish more visibly
- Collect data more proactively
- Work together more jointly

Examples of these activities have been reported in the annual service user diversity reports and workforce diversity reports published every December on the Council's website. These are in themselves an illustration of our approach to **publishing what we do** in this policy arena in a more visible and open way, with the reports now forming a library on the dedicated section of the website, and providing opportunity for trend analysis as well as a way in which to record examples of the efforts that are being made.

Turning to the actions around **collecting data more proactively**, and linking this to wider corporate efforts to establish and consolidating our evidence base around the needs of our communities and businesses, it is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take.

The decisions that we make when planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that we have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in our decision making processes. This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read. Completed templates may be found within a library section on the dedicated web pages, as well as attached to committee reports, with an increasing usage of these as screening assessments over the last period.

The approach we use sets out to help to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

Equality impact screenings are recommended at the start of a consultation process, and at the end, in order to utilise feedback from communities in shaping services. Where there have been low levels of response from particular groupings, eg younger people, further specific efforts may then be made to engage with them during

development and implementation of the service change, as well as continuing ongoing engagement efforts and involving elected Members as community leaders.

In terms of **working more jointly**, this has been an area of real progress, within and external to the Council. Internal work involving staff across the Council enabled development and delivery of mandatory online equality training for all staff, complementing training for Members. An external work exemplar, referenced with regard to linkages with the natural environment, involves work with schools and interfaith forums to help children and young people to understand the messages of the Holocaust in ways that are age appropriate and meaningful, through the planting of a cherry tree orchard of remembrance across Shropshire..

2. Local proposals for 2020 to 2024

It is the policy intention to continue to work at weaving together a number of actions utilising the three main activity strands. This includes a number of proposed actions.

Publish more visibly

- Refresh of online training materials and associated guidance, in order to equip the workforce and elected Members to build upon their understanding of equality, diversity and social inclusion issues, and their ability to help the Council to meet the three national equality aims. This will draw upon guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and lessons arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Maintenance and development of the dedicated pages on the Council website, including links to guidance for groupings and for individuals.

Collect data more proactively

- Incorporation of health and well-being assessments into equality and social inclusion impact assessments for service areas, in order to equip service area to have due regard to the three aims when considering and planning service changes. This will draw upon best practice including experiences of other rural authorities
- In specific reference to BAME communities, follow up on recommendations of the Runnymede Trust to the Women and Equalities Committee, and those within the PHE report “Beyond the data”, with regard to data collection. The latter is as follows:

*“**Research and data:** to deepen our understanding of the wider socio-economic determinants, improve data recording of faith and ethnicity and greater use of community participatory research.”*

Work more jointly

- Strengthen linkages with the community and voluntary sector and with interfaith forums, on initiatives including actions to enhance the positive as

well as mitigate the negative equality impacts of the pandemic upon faith communities.

- Continued support for national events and activities around HMD, Show Racism the Red Card, and World Mental Health Day, including proactive communications campaigns with other local authorities, and across sectors.

In working more jointly as a Council with partners, we are also very much being guided by and taking a lead from the **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**. They have been giving evidence to the UK Parliament Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into Covid-19 (*“Unequal Impact: Coronavirus (Covid-19) and the impact on people with Protected Characteristics”*) about actions to be taken by central government and by local authorities. They are very keen to see the PSED used as the framework for such actions.

They also reiterated calls made by them in 2017 for a national race equality strategy, and it would be timely to make reference to this in developing a local proposed action for 2020 to 2024 around combating racism. This could usefully in itself point to our 2019 action of supporting the “Show Racism the Red Card” campaign, and set out efforts to work through schools, other public sector organisations, etc on local positive action, and to draw upon any further guidance that also emerges from the EHRC following George Floyd’s death.

3. Activity area: combatting racism and other forms of discrimination

Following on from approval by Cabinet of the proposals for action, several **activity areas in relation to combatting racism and other forms of discrimination** are highlighted here.

Workforce survey

The Council workforce were invited to take part in a Blackout Day survey during the summer, designed to explore staff members’ experiences around issues of race and inequality. The aim was to learn more about any inequality and how officers could support each other to address it. Directors were presented with the results at a meeting in December 2020.

It was clear from the many detailed comments that survey respondents did not want this consultation to be a one off and they indicated that Shropshire Council needs to be visible in their endeavours to embrace diversity and work to combat racism and discrimination in every area of council business; be that internal or public facing.

Workforce and elected member training proposal

It was timely to consider recommendations in the report around training for officers and Members alongside a training proposal that had already been developed for review of the current offer, which has been in place since 2018 and which we refer to in the Equality Objectives Action Plan as an action area. Volunteers have put their names forward through the Blackout Day survey, to help us with work around tackling racism, including input to review and update of the training offer.

For the current online offer, the e-development team and the Rurality and Equalities Specialist worked with a cross-section of staff in a range of service areas, specialisms and backgrounds, in order to seek to ensure that the content of the offer hit the right notes, and that there was good functionality. Directors have agreed that it would make some sense to replicate this approach.

The overall proposal for the review is for a tri phase approach involving:

- an update of online training for staff and for elected Members,
- closer links with NHS staff through the STP on where we could potentially work together given crossover with health and social care impacts of Covid-19 on Protected Characteristic groupings in the community and for staff within Protected Characteristic Groupings.
- delivery by an external facilitator of face to face ie online interactive seminars with senior managers, plus an approach to update of member training, ahead of delivery of face to face training to the new cohort after elections next May.

This would enable there to be an explicit visible emphasis on continuing the conversations and accelerating efforts to make progress on tackling racism within an overall corporate and partnership equality policy framework.

We are therefore continuing to work with our colleagues in the NHS to progress relevant training and other actions to tackle issues such as ageism and sexism, and discrimination on grounds of religion and belief, as well as experiences of racism amongst the workforce, including from those who use our services.

Show Racism the Red Card Day and Black History Month, October 2020

Black History Month was originally founded around thirty years ago to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to the UK over many generations. Now, Black History Month has expanded to include the history of not just African and Caribbean people but black people in general

It is held to highlight and celebrate the achievements and contributions of the black community in the UK. Throughout history, black people have made huge contributions to society in the fields of art, music, science, literature and many more areas.

As part of national Black History Month, Shropshire Council marked Wear Red Day on Friday 16th October 2020 to show racism the red card in Shropshire. Directors donned red for the day, and members of staff working from home across the county showed their support with red props ranging from a model of a red K6 telephone kiosk to red flowers, toys, and red backgrounds. Photos were then sent in to form a visual gallery of support on staff computer screens, with a special design for the day on the screen.

The Council worked with the national charity Show Racism the Red Card, to make this year's event the key initiative in local activity with partners.

The charity commented in their own national press coverage that:

“This year’s event will be different due to coronavirus restrictions across the country. However, Shropshire Council have emerged as a sterling example of how to successfully bring their 3,500 staff together, even though they are working from home, and demonstrate solidarity against racism”

An online resources pack about Black History Month was also produced with support from Shropshire Archives, available on the Council website, and an online seminar arranged with NHS colleagues at which the key note speaker was Mr Patrick Vernon OBE, the Windrush campaigner, who kindly spoke about his co-authoring of the book “100 Great Black Britons”.

The online resources on the Council website highlight a range of national materials around Black History Month, as well as local material available through Shropshire Archives. Shropshire Archives operates across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. It aims to collect material which relates to the whole community of Shropshire past and present. We are aware that the collections don’t always reflect this fully and the service is grateful for any help which enables us to build a more complete picture of life in Shropshire.

Holocaust Memorial Day 27th January 2021

The Wear Red Day charity makes reference in its literature and films to the importance of remembering the Holocaust and other genocides, as we already do through Holocaust Memorial Day activity with school and interfaith forums. We are growing a cherry tree orchard of remembrance across Shropshire through planting a tree with a different primary school every year.

The Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 theme is “Be the Light in the Darkness”, on which positive message we conclude this report.

C. Concluding Remarks

We hope that you have found this report to be interesting and useful, and look forward to taking this and other opportunities to continue to report on progress in meeting our local equality objectives, and in so doing serving to aid achievement of the national equality aims.

This annual service user diversity report forms part of efforts to continue to increase the depth, breadth and focus of the evidence base about the people who live and work in Shropshire.

Together with its sister report on workforce diversity, these tandem reports set out to share information and statistics about the diversity of Shropshire Council’s service users and communities, and to complement each other. This is not least as the workforce is largely drawn from local communities who therefore experience the services of the Council in their day to day lives.

Table one: this is a table to show the ten groupings of people whose needs Shropshire Council thinks about in particular in its decision making processes

Main definitions source: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Protected Characteristic	Definition
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).
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.
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and civil partnership	In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. [1]. This is also true in Scotland where relevant legislation has been brought into force. [2]. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	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.

Protected Characteristic	Definition
Religion and 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	A man or a woman
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
Social inclusion (additional grouping in Shropshire)	Families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people considered to be vulnerable, ie having complex needs and/or requiring additional support; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families; young people leaving care

[1] Section 1, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013; [2] Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014.