

Title: Equalities Task & Finish Group

Lead: Councillor Mini Mangat [mini.mangat@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:mini.mangat@warwickdc.gov.uk) Chair of the Task & Finish Group

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Day

Wards of the District directly affected: None

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	15/2/223	Andrew Day
<b>Finance</b>	30/1/23	Lorraine Henson
<b>Legal Services</b>		
<b>Chief Executive</b>	14/2/23	Chris Elliott
<b>Programme Director Climate Change</b>	14/2/23	Dave Barber
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	30/1/23	Andrew Jones Tracy Dolphin
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	14/2/23	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	14/2/23	Andrew Jones
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>		
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	Yes	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

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## Summary

The report brings forward the conclusion of the work of the Equalities Task & Finish Group for consideration by the Cabinet.

### Recommendation(s)

- (1) That the Cabinet notes the outcome of the work of the Task & Finish Group including the brief for community engagement work, as set out at Appendix 3
  - (2) That Cabinet supports the positive outcomes that are being delivered as set out in the report.
  - (3) That Cabinet agrees to:
    - (i) a budget of at least £5000 be approved to undertake an equalities community review and engagement work on a cyclical basis every 3 years with the next in 2026; and
    - (ii) Officers align the equalities categories used by the Council with those of the Census 2021.
  - (4) That the Cabinet thanks the Members of the Task & Finish Group and Officers involved for their work.
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## 1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 In June 2020 the Council approved a motion, as part of the international response following the death of George Floyd, and as a result of that Motion the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were asked to establish a Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group (the Group) was established by the Scrutiny Committee and charged with undertaking a review of the Council's approach to equality and diversity, especially with regard to race. Its report to the Committee would include an action plan with a view to the Cabinet adopting the Committee's recommendations in the report and its action plan. The progress and outcomes of the action plan would be monitored by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, with the expectation that measurable improvements would be made by 2023.
- 1.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported the request and appointed a Task & Finish Group at its meeting on 22 July 2020, along with its Scope as set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The Group was initially formed of Councillors Carolyn Gifford, Mangat, Noone and Tangri, with Councillor Noone being replaced by Councillor Illingworth in late November 2020.
- 1.3 The Group split the work into two phases, internal (looking at equalities issues relating to the internal practice and policies, and the experiences of employees who are from ethnic minorities, and phase two that would review service delivery, as set out within its scope, including details of community engagement and including the officer and other resources needed to support this process.
- 1.4 The second phase commenced in October 2021 but was delayed due to the impact of the proposed merger with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the officer commitments in delivering this. This was then followed by the work to undo the planned integration, the Commonwealth Games and the death of Her Majesty the Queen. In addition it took longer than expected to recruit to the role of Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Business Partner (three rounds of recruitment), who would be a key officer for supporting the work of the Group

and the successful candidate did not start with the Council until December 2022.

- 1.5 These constraints limited the operation of the Group who were committed to completing the work for February 2022 to enable the overall work to be completed by the end of this Council.
- 1.6 Those constraints aside, a number of positive pieces of work have been able to be completed, including analysis of the public engagement with residents' surveys against base data from the Census in 2021 and 2011.
- 1.7 The Census 2021 data on ethnicity within the District was released in late 2021. This, set out at Appendix 2, allows comparison between the 2011 census, to see change within the District and also how representative the residents' surveys undertaken by the Council in 2021 and 2022 were.
- 1.8 The results identify that the Census in 2021 used different data categories for ethnicity than were used in the residents' surveys. This has provided some limitations for direct comparisons but still provides a strong illustration of the representativeness of the survey responses. Overall the Task & Finish Group were pleased with the representative data, noting that the surveys were undertaken with a fair process for random selection and weighting subsequently added to the results. This process will be reviewed for any future all-residents' surveys to consider the significant change in respect of decrease in proportion of people identifying as White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British.
- 1.9 In addition to this all councillors have been provided with a breakdown of the District to Ward level for ethnicity for their reference. This has also been shared with senior officers across the Council to help with planning of engagement events in specific areas. Further analysis of the Census 2021 is now being undertaken by officers in respect of gender, disability and age in relation to the residents' surveys.
- 1.10 The learning from this data will be used as a reference point for work being undertaken by the Council and can also be used as part of the consideration when completing equality impact assessments for delivery of services.
- 1.11 In addition to this work the Council now has an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Business Partner for an 18-hour a week post. The new EDI Business Partner started on 1 December 2022 and is an experienced professional with awareness of WDC policies and processes, and also has significant experience in EDI from both an employer's and other perspectives. This has been welcomed by the Task & Finish group as a significant step forward in recognising equalities as a key aspect of all service delivery within the Council.
- 1.12 The (EDI) Business Partner is reviewing the work of the Council to highlight immediate priorities and longer term action of the EDI agenda within the organisation. These priorities will be fed back to service areas as appropriate for them to take forward.
- 1.13 To compliment the work on equalities the Group has recognized the more inclusive approach that is being taken, more generally across the Council. For example, the Council has just supported Black History Month and has promoted a series of other awareness initiatives, such as menopause awareness, in October. The speakers, in respect of menopause awareness, were both male and female, to get a different perspective and impact from a legal point of view in term of equalities.

- 1.14 There is planned training on EDI, including for members, delivered by the new EDI officer, with a view to raising awareness and increasing councillors' confidence in challenging on equalities in respect of the work they see. This will be used as a test event with learning being taken forward into training for the new Council, to further enhance the current training provision.
- 1.15 With support from the EDI Business Partner the group have defined a scope for recruiting a partner to secure engagement to enhance and maintain communication and feedback from existing community groups. The full scope for this work, which has been agreed by the Group in consultation with Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, is attached at Appendix 2 to the report. This brief has now been advertised for procurement with a view to competition in summer 2023, with the report being shared with members and actions brought forward as required.
- 1.16 To supplement this, equalities is now added as a standard agenda item for every Programme Advisory Board. This is not as a separate discussion point but to act as reminder when considering any paper or item to include any equalities matters. The new Committee report template also provides a reminder about the requirement for Equality Impact Assessments which the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner is developing further guidance and support for report authors.
- 1.17 Throughout the work of the Task & Finish Group they have been supported and worked with a number of officers across the Council and it is considered important they are thanked for their time in supporting the Group in delivering this key piece of work.
- 1.18 The report was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February who agreed some minor changes to the report in respect of funding for future work be revised in respect of the funding at recommendation (3)(i) to allow for inflation between now and the next survey.

## **2 Alternative Options**

- 2.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide to ask the Group to undertake further work on the outcomes or could reject the proposals and establish a new Group. However this work would not commence until the election has taken place and would be a consideration by the new Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **3 Legal Implications**

- 3.1 The proposals aids the Council in promoting its awareness and understanding of the Equalities Act 2010 and demonstrating its compliance with the act.

## **4 Financial**

- 4.1 The proposed engagement work is currently funded through an existing budget underspend, however to repeat this engagement and future residents surveys will need to be built in the budget for the Council at the appropriate time.

## **5 Business Strategy**

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Business Strategy which sets out key areas for service delivery. This proposal responds to two of those proposals in respect of Maintain or Improve Services and Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term.
- 5.2 In respect of both of these points these decisions are being brought forward to provide more robust scrutiny in proposals that come forward to provide assurance to the public on the approaches being taken by the Council.

## **6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no significant implications for the environment or climate change from the recommendations..

## **7 Analysis of the effects on Equality**

7.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed in respect of the proposed engagement work and no issues have been raised.

## **8 Data Protection**

8.1 There is no change in the handling of personal data as a result of these proposals.

## **9 Health and Wellbeing**

9.1 There are no direct impacts of the report in respect of Health & Wellbeing.

## **10 Risk Assessment**

10.1 The Committee

## **11 Consultation**

11.1 The report has been developed by the Task & Finish group in consultation with the Council's . Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner

**Background papers:** None

**Supporting documents:** None

**Initial Scope as approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2020**

<p><b>Review Topic</b> (Name of review)</p>	<p>The Council's approach to equality and diversity, especially with regard to race</p>
<p><b>Working Group Members</b></p>	<p>Councillors Gifford, Mangat, Noone and Tangri.</p>
<p><b>Key Officer Contact</b></p>	<p>Tracy Dolphin, Head of P &amp; C, Tarandeep Mahal, HR Business Partner, Liz Young, Community Partnership Team Manager, Rose Winship, Head of Cultural Services (Chair of PSSG), Nicki Curwood Marketing and Communications Manager (others as and when required)</p>
<p><b>Scrutiny Officer Support</b></p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p><b>Rationale</b> (key issues and/or reason for doing the review)</p>	<p>On 24 June 2020 Council approved a notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Mangat and seconded by Councillor Tangri. Part of the Motion requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish a Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group would be charged with undertaking a review of the Council's approach to equality and diversity, especially with regard to race. Its report to the Committee would include an action plan with a view to the Executive adopting the Committee's recommendations in the report and its action plan. The progress and outcomes of the action plan would be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the expectation that measurable improvements would be made by 2023.</p>
<p><b>Purpose/Objective of Review</b> (specify exactly what the review should achieve)</p>	<p>To review the Council's approach, both internally and externally, to racial equality in the broader context of equality and diversity, looking both for successes and areas for improvement.</p> <p>With a view to providing assurance on the current work the Council undertakes on equalities and provides a framework for enhancing this.</p> <p>Areas to consider will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback from sectors of WDC workforce, safe space to raise issues, relationships, health and wellbeing. Processes and Management Information relating to recruitment at all levels, retention and promotion.</li> <li>2. WDC's engagement with residents, particularly where WDC is providing services, but also including the effectiveness of public messaging (website, press releases etc).</li> <li>3. All contractors dealing with residents by exploring the procurement practices and which race equality conditions are applied into tenders if any.</li> <li>4. WDC's promotion of racial equality generally e.g. addressing hate crime.</li> <li>5. If the Council can do more to encourage engagement of BAME residents in democratic processes including standing for election and identifying its messages reach these Communities.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Scope of the Topic</b> (what is specifically to be included/excluded)</p>	<p>Reviewing our existing approach to racial equality and promoting diversity and considering any areas to improve that are not already within the existing action plan’).</p> <p>The Group will have three core focuses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Equality within the work force of the Council</li> <li>(2) Equality in the services it (and its contractors deliver)</li> <li>(3) The promotion of racial equality generally e.g. addressing hate crime</li> </ol> <p>While the focus will be on equality and diversity in respect of race if other areas of inequality are identified these must be reported back to the next meeting of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The review cannot consider any perceptions or allegations of failure to comply with the equality act by other organisations. If this occurs the Group will refer these to the appropriate party.</p> <p>The review cannot consider the equalities of other organisations, including the diversity of its contractors staffing. It could however share findings with its contractors (in respect of staffing for them to be aware of). If these are identified they will be shared with the appropriate organisation.</p>
<p><b>Indicators of Success</b> (what factors would tell you what a good review should look like)</p>	<p>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) outcomes that identify the maturity of racial inclusivity within WDC, the development of anti-discriminatory positive action plans and dashboards.</p>
<p><b>Specify Evidence Sources</b> (Background Information documents to look at)</p>	<p>Current WDC Policies WDC staff equality data WDC data held in respect of customer equality criteria WDC data of complaints made regarding equalities Information held by WDC contractors of equality of their customers WDC data on measuring success of marketing and advertising Best practice from other organisations including other councils. Engagement with relevant groups: see purpose, above.</p>
<p><b>Specify Witnesses/Experts</b> (Who to see and when)</p>	<p>Stakeholders identified below should be considered experts in terms of their experiences. Also organisations that specialise in this work should be consulted e.g. the Equality and Inclusion Partnership. Keira Rounsley, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Practitioner, Warwickshire County Council.</p>
<p><b>Specify Site Visits</b> (where and when)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Consultation with Stakeholders</b> (who should we consult?)		WDC staff and councillors including those with strategic responsibility. <b>Consultation approach must be signed off my O&amp;S Cttee before being published</b> Groups identified in 'Purpose' above. Both individuals and groups within the local BAME community in Warwick District, including Community Leaders. Warwick District Council recognised Trades Unions	
<b>Level of Publicity</b> (what level is appropriate and what method should be used)		High. There is considerable public interest in this review. The Council should welcome views, experiences and input from residents. These will be developed <b>Consultation approach must be signed off my O&amp;S Cttee before being published</b>	
<b>Barriers/dangers/risks</b> (identify any weaknesses or potential pitfalls)		Risk that a few loud voices are unduly influential; but equally those who have been discriminated against may be reluctant to speak. Too many issues are explored, so the review fails to complete within the allotted time. Competing priorities within the Council Difficulty of engagement during COVID-19 response. Specialist support may be required, to provide understanding of requirements of the Equality Act Insufficient funds to buy in specialist support if required Insufficient resources with the HR/Payroll/HCP and other Service Areas and Committee team to provide support for the review. The review will be based on data held by the Council and it is known that a significant number of people do not declare their ethnicity on forms. There may be some aspects which require approval from the current Employment Committee and some from the Executive. Issues may be identified about other service providers which are not in our control and these need to be directed to respective authority for them to consider	
<b>Projected Start Date</b>	August 2020	<b>Draft Report Deadline</b>	January 2021
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	Fortnightly	<b>Projected Completion Date</b>	March 2021
<b>Key Milestones</b>		Must report back on work to date in full to O&S on 29 September and 8 December 2020, plus verbal updates to 18 August, and 10 November 2020.	
<b>Date to evaluate impact</b>		Annual report in 2022 and March 2023 outlining performance against the agreed recommendations	
<b>Methods of tracking / Evaluating</b>		Using the annual targets and dashboards.	



**Appendix 2**

data set	population	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian
2022 WDC residents survey		0.1	0.5	4.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.5	-	0.3
2021 census	148,454	0.1	1.0	6.8	0.6	1.2	0.7	0.3	0.1	1.2
2021 merger survey of WDC residents		-	-	4.0	-	1.0	-	-	-	1.0
2011 census	137,648	0.1	0.8	4.9	0.3	1.1	0.7	-	-	-

data set	population	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups : White and Black African	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups : White and Black Caribbean	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group: Arab	Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	White: Irish	White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	White: Roma	White: Other White
2022 WDC residents survey		0.1	0.2	0.4		0.1	87.0	1.2	-	-	4.6
2021 census	148,454	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.2	1.4	75.9	1.4	-	0.1	7.1
2021 merger survey of WDC residents		-	-	-		-	88.0	1.0			3.0
2011 census	137,648			2.0		0.9	89.1	-	-	-	-

## **Warwick District Council - EDI Project Brief - engagement with the wider community**

### **Background**

Warwick District Council (WDC) is committed to ensuring that Equality and Diversity is embedded in the organisation's vision and values. Inclusion and representation for all within our community drives the agenda for a diverse and engaged community and builds upon the work already undertaken by WDC, supported by the Council's public sector Equality duty.

WDC wants to improve accessibility to its services for parts of our wider community specifically Ethnically Diverse communities. WDC wants to ensure that people feel able to reach out to us, and we want to hear the voices from all our communities to demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity in order to implement targeted support for those who need it.

WDC is looking to procure a provider who will work within set parameters with a view to reporting on:

- engagement with 'Ethnically Diverse communities'
- community needs
- data from qualitative analysis following engagement activities
- recommendations for progressive and sustainable change.

The Council recognises the importance of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 in delivering additional benefits through procurement. In this instance the Council considers that the wider social benefits from this low value short-term contract will be delivered through the outputs of the engagement work.

### **Scope of the project**

Warwick District Council has established a Task & Finish Group of four Councillors who were tasked to review the Council's approach, both internally and externally, to racial equality in the broader context of equality and diversity, looking both for successes and areas for improvement. The overarching aim has been to seek assurance on the current work the Council undertakes on equalities and provide a framework for enhancing this.

Based upon data analysis of the WDC residents' survey 2021 and the national Census figures, WDC is looking to improve the way in which we engage as a Council with under-represented groups within the Community.

The scope of the project is within Warwick District and seeks to secure engagement on an ongoing basis so that the Council maintains communication and feedback from existing community groups with a view to working with any new groups identified.

### **Objectives**

Our main objective is to secure engagement with under-represented groups within the wider Warwick District community. The Council is looking to engage effectively and to build robust communication channels with a view to supporting these communities in the District.

The successful provider may wish to integrate with newly formed or established Community Groups across the District using a variety of methods:

- Focus groups - what do the communities require from WDC?
- Faith groups - what can WDC improve when engaging with communities?

- Open sessions - bringing different communities together
- Quantitative surveys

WDC recognises that the success of the project relies on engagement with the wider community and one of the key objectives is to identify opportunities to build in progressive community forums where residents can engage proactively with the Council on a range of identified issues.

### **Benefits**

In line with the public sector equality duty to ensure that we are engaged with all communities within Warwick District, we can all benefit from listening to the experience of our residents which may lead to changes and improvements to current service provision. Many areas within the District have been recognised as good places to live and the Council needs to ensure that our services are available and accessible to all of our community.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 WDC is looking to ensure that all residents are supported by the Council in relation to their needs and beliefs. Forming engagement groups with Ethnically Diverse communities helps us to implement what is required from the wider community in a practical and holistic sense.

### **Risks**

The Council is aware that seldom-heard groups can be difficult to identify and engage with, hence the comparison between the response rates from different ethnic groups to the 2021 Census and the residents' survey.

The Council needs to ensure that this EDI project uses a variety of methods including face-to-face sessions, online surveys or meetings, or paper-based questionnaires, all with the same questions to ensure data capture is consistent.

### **Value and Length of contract**

The estimated value of this contract is £5,000.

It is expected that this initial EDI engagement project will take no longer than 6 months to complete and report.