

# EQUALITIES

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



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# FOREWORD

**Rotherham Council is committed to achieving equality for all and a cohesive society built on mutual respect, where no-one is left behind. The Council's approach to agreeing policy priorities is underpinned by this, with a focus on tackling inequalities running through everything that we do.**

I am proud that equality considerations have continued to influence the Council's internal operations and processes. As reflected in this report, engagement with diverse communities has directly influenced co-produced service provisions. The Council has continued to work closely with local voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to provide valuable support to residents throughout the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council's Cabinet committed a support package of £24m, including awarding payments of up to £400 per household to 5,294 applicants to help them with their energy costs. In addition, our Employment Solutions team have provided holistic support to enable nearly 1,000 residents to secure sustainable employment or access accredited training. This demonstrates our pledge that no one will be left behind and that we will continue to help residents overcome barriers that prevent them from achieving their aspirations and fulfilling their potential.

In the last year several events celebrating and championing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) were promoted by the Council and its local partners, including Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women's Day, Black History Month, Interfaith Week, The Rotherham Show and Disability Awareness Month. Last year, Rotherham hosted games for UEFA Women's Euros 2022. The success of this tournament has seen women's participation in football increase, and I hope the legacy of the Euros will lead to equal access and opportunities for women and girls across all sports in Rotherham.

Our corporate equality, diversity, and inclusion steering group continues to oversee and lead the delivery of equality priorities across the Council. The group supported the launch of our internal staff representation networks, which offer an opportunity for Council employees to come together to create positive change, influence policies and processes, and improve our working culture.

The Council continues to demonstrate success in working with a range of partners, ensuring local equality priorities are addressed. Launched in January 2023, The Rotherham Plan sets out an ambitious programme of activity through to 2025, describing how local partners will work together to deliver a better Rotherham for all. The plan focuses efforts on creating more connected neighbourhoods; making residents feel safer; preventing ill health; and enabling people to live happily and independently.

The commitment to achieve "Excellent" under the equality framework for local government remains a high priority, as the Council wants to be among the best in the country in our approach to equalities. This will be a major milestone for the Council and will help drive better outcomes for local people.

I invite everyone to join us in celebrating our successes to date and in our positive agenda for equalities, diversity and inclusion, as we continue to support people through cost-of-living pressures, now is a critical moment for us all to come together to work for the benefit of all communities.



**Councillor Saghir Alam**

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services,  
Community Safety and Finance

# INTRODUCTION

The Council wants to see a borough that is based on social justice, where all residents have a good quality of life and can achieve their potential. This is underpinned by the recognition that individuals, families, and communities do not all have the same starting point or access to the same opportunities.

Over the last 12 months, the Council has continued to adapt and respond to new challenges, such as the rising cost-of-living. This has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the most disadvantaged communities being hit the hardest, and has also uncovered latent vulnerability within our communities. Throughout our cost-of-living response, equalities have remained an important priority and this will continue as the borough moves into recovery.

Equalities, diversity and inclusion has remained an important Council priority. The purpose of this report is to highlight the progress made over the past twelve months on the equalities agenda, as well as outlining next steps. The report covers key achievements and case studies from across the Council, focusing on the four themes of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG):

**THEME 1:** Understanding and working with our communities

**THEME 2:** Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment

**THEME 3:** Responsive services and customer care

**THEME 4:** Diverse and engaged workforce

The “Looking ahead” section sets out priority work for the coming year under each of the new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy objectives.



# ROTHERHAM CONTEXT

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire. The borough is divided into 25 wards covering a wide diversity of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Rotherham developed as a major industrial centre of coal mining and steel making, which have shaped the borough's character. Following the decline of traditional industries, regeneration has brought new opportunities to the area, including advanced manufacturing.



**Rotherham's population** has grown from 257,600 in 2011 to **265,800** in 2020. Population growth has resulted from natural increase (more births than deaths), net inward migration and longer life expectancy.

General demographic and socio-economic trends have included a growing and increasingly diverse population, with significant international migration, from other EU countries. The population is ageing, which not only means more older people but also more disabled people. Inequalities persist for workless, disabled, and low paid people, who have been adversely affected by welfare reform since 2012. Health inequalities are also significant in Rotherham, where average healthy life expectancy in the borough is well below the national average.

The recently released Census 2021 data indicates the borough is becoming increasingly diverse and provides an up-to-date picture of the Rotherham population. This new data has been included in the report where relevant and allows the Council to see how Rotherham has changed between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

**Rotherham is a diverse borough**, and the ethnic profile continues to change. Based on the 2021 census, the proportion of residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities increased from 8.1% in 2011 to 11.7% in 2021. Ethnic diversity is most evident amongst young people, as 20% of school age children were from a BME background (DfE 2021/22). The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after white British. Rotherham's BME population is very concentrated in the inner areas of the town whilst the outer areas were 94% white British in 2021. 42% of BME residents live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country and for some groups the figure is higher. This compares with the borough average of 19.5%. Rotherham has 52,228 people aged 65 years or over or 19.6% of the population, above the national average of 18.4% (2021 Census). The population aged over 65 is projected to increase to 58,978 people by 2027, with the largest increase being in the number of people aged over 75. Rotherham has a polarised geography of deprivation and affluence. The most deprived communities are concentrated in the central area whilst the most affluent areas are to the south, although the overall pattern is complex.

**Rotherham is in the top 20%** most deprived areas in England with 13,479 children living in “absolute poverty” in 2019/20 according to Department for Work and Pensions figures.

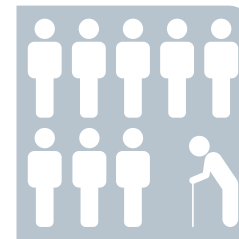
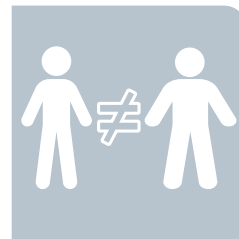
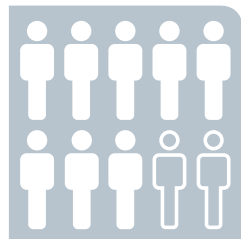
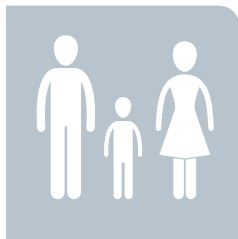
2.1 % of residents in Rotherham identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) according to 2021 Census data. The Census also reveals 0.6 % of Rotherham residents aged over 16 identify as transgender, non-binary or have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth, compared to 0.5 % nationally.

Within the borough of Rotherham there is a gender pay gap between men and women whereby the average male worker earns £10,583 more than the average female worker (2022 median gross annual pay). It is important to note the gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same roles; it is the result of the type of jobs occupied by men and women and the salaries these roles attract. Women in Rotherham are more likely than men to work part-time and in lower paying roles.

Rotherham has comparatively low skills, particularly at degree level, and struggles both to retain and attract graduates. Only 31.9 % of working age people in Rotherham are educated to degree level or above, compared with 43.6 % nationally (2021).

Rotherham had 56,177 people, or 21.1 % of the population, with a limiting long term health problem or disability in 2021, with 9.8 % saying this limits their activity a lot, compared with the average of 7.5 % nationally. Although there have been health improvements, health inequalities remain and in some cases are widening.

People in the most deprived parts of Rotherham experience poorer health and a higher mortality rate than residents living in the least deprived areas. Life expectancy at birth in the borough is 77.6 years for males and 81.3 years for females, which is below the national averages (2016-2020). The gap between the most deprived 10% and least deprived 10% of Rotherham is 9.9 years for males and 9.5 years for females.



# THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

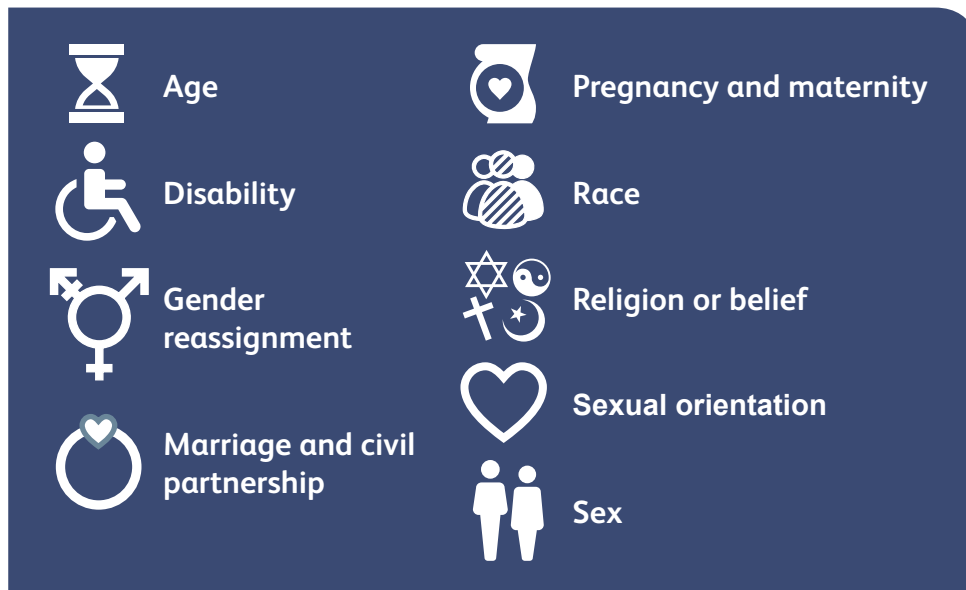
The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on the Council and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not.
- **Foster good relations** between people.

The act reminds us that there can be no fair society if some groups and communities remain disadvantaged because of their legally protected characteristic. The stated protected characteristics are:

The equality duty requires the Council to take a proactive approach to embedding equality into everything we do. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that suppliers also take a positive approach to equality. Furthermore, the duty encourages us to understand how different people will be affected by decisions.

In addition, the EFLG requires the Council to consider socio-economic inequalities. This means ensuring that, when making strategic decisions about how functions are carried out and services delivered, there is a focus on reducing the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.



# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022-2025

**In 2021, the Council set out plans to refresh its equality objectives and take into account the impact of Covid 19 on local people. This has been achieved through the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which has been informed by consultation with elected members, Council officers, partners and local communities.**

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) 2022–2025 is a supporting document to the Council Plan 2022-2025 which has equalities, diversity and inclusion woven through it. The EDI strategy looks at what the Council has already committed to through an equalities lens and effectively maps out how the Council aims to remove and reduce obstacles preventing some people from fully participating in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of the borough.

The strategy set out priority equality objectives with an alignment to the EFLG. The objectives inform an annual workplan set out in this annual report each year. As the strategy supports the Council Plan, many of the actions within the annual workplan are activities that the Council is already reporting on quarterly. The objectives are:

- Understanding, listening to and working with Rotherham's communities.
- Delivering accessible and responsive services that meet diverse needs.
- Providing leadership and organisation commitment to actively promote equalities.
- Ensuring a diverse, supported and engaged workforce.

## THE AIM FOR “EXCELLENT”

Throughout the pandemic, equalities have remained high on the agenda and have been an integral part of both the Year Ahead Plan and in the new Council Plan 2022-25. In 2020, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement led the Local Government Association (LGA) to further consult local authorities and officers nationwide to update the equality framework, making it more inclusive and relevant.

In late 2021, this consultation resulted in a revised equality framework with the LGA setting more challenging actions to reach “Excellent”. The Council has embraced these changes and moved its target to reach “Excellent” to 2025, ensuring equality principles are not only embedded but that outcomes can be measured to reflect positive changes made. The Council's equality strategy aligns with the equality framework and supports our goal of reaching “Excellent”.

## EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

The Equalities Annual Report, published in June 2022 set out “next steps” for actions over the coming year, aligned to the modules of the EFLG. This report gives an overview of achievements since then including achievements and case studies from long term projects and policies initiated in previous years.



# THEME I: UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

**To reduce inequalities and challenge discrimination, it is essential that the Council understands the needs and priorities of communities. This includes collecting and analysing equalities data, as well as engaging with local people, fostering good relations within communities, and supporting local people to participate in public life.**

*Key achievements in 2022/23 have included:*

## **Consultation and Engagement Framework and Toolkit**

In 2022, the Council refreshed the Consultation and Engagement Framework and Toolkit setting out principles, standards, and guidance our services should follow to plan, design, and deliver robust and inclusive public consultations, placing local communities at the forefront of decision making.

The toolkit is an additional aid our officers can use to identify communities who may be impacted by their decisions and allowing affected groups to be part of the process from design stage to the consultation itself.

In parallel with the refreshed toolkit we will provide support to VCS groups through a new infrastructure contract currently being developed through a co-design exercise.

Implementing the refreshed toolkit alongside our existing processes for engagement will remove barriers to participation in consultation activities as officers use appropriate methods and forums to gather views from our diverse communities.

Looking forward, training and support will be provided to enable full and effective use of the toolkit to enhance outcomes.

## **Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy**

The refreshed Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2022. This strategy provides a high-level framework for how the Council will deliver its neighbourhood working model and enhance the role of local Councillors as community leaders, maximising their skills, expertise and knowledge. A key component to this strategy is asking and listening to communities, working with them rather than 'doing to' them.

A consultation exercise took place between February and May 2023 to help inform the delivery of the strategy and the supporting equalities assessment, both of which are due to be presented to the Improving Places Select Commission in July 2023. The feedback from the consultation is also being used to influence ward priorities, which will be updated in June 2023. The exercise included interactions with voluntary groups representing a diverse range of communities.

## Rotherham's Carers Strategy

The Council recently launched 'The Borough That Cares Strategic Framework 2022-25'. More than 30,000 residents are providing unpaid care in Rotherham - often alongside work or education - for someone who could not manage without their help due to illness, disability, addiction or mental ill health. This care is often invisible. The framework will be achieved through strong partnership approaches that ensure carers in Rotherham stay mentally and physically healthy, and economically active, for longer. Ultimately, the purpose of the framework is to ensure carers can live well, be active and have fulfilled lives.



## CASE STUDY:

### Children's Capital of Culture

**In February 2022, Rotherham was transformed into a playground, as the borough launched its Children's Capital of Culture initiative with an exciting skate and arts festival and 10 days of events.**

Young people and children took to the town centre to watch demos by Team GB skaters and BMX pros, a giant spray-painting robot painting their selfies, live bands, and large-scale art installations. They also got to take part in a wide range of creative workshops and events, including spray painting, screen printing and storytelling.

The launch festival provided a taste of what 2025 will look like in Rotherham when it becomes the world's first Children's Capital of Culture.

Cllr Dave Sheppard, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, said:

*"It has been fantastic to see Rotherham come to life over half term with an exciting programme of events and activities that children and young people have created in partnership with the Council's cultural services and partners such as Flux Rotherham and Grimm & Co.*

*The launch festival has so far provided a real insight into what becoming Children's Capital of Culture will mean for Rotherham and its young people, and it has been fantastic to see such a great turn out and get such a positive response from everybody who has attended."*

Julie Dalton, Chair of the Children's Capital of Culture Programme Board, added:

*"The launch festival has been many months in the making and marks the start of Rotherham's journey to becoming Children's Capital of Culture in 2025. The whole team behind the programme is looking forward to working with young people across the borough to design and deliver more fantastic events,*



*create more training opportunities, support their creative development, and increase access to employment and skills within the creative and cultural sector in the lead up to 2025 and beyond."*

## CASE STUDY:

### Council receives 'exemplar' status for tenant engagement

The Council celebrated receiving 'exemplar' status for tenant engagement following a rigorous assessment process with national tenant engagement organisation Tenants Participation Advisory Service (Tpas). Tpas promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England, with the Council receiving the accolade for its continued commitment to making sure tenant's voices are heard.

Jenny Osbourne from Tpas presented the award to The Mayor of Rotherham, Councillor Tajamal Khan, at the annual Tenant's Open Day, held 29 September 2022, at New York Stadium.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Amy Brookes said: *"This is excellent news for the Council and our tenants and residents. We will always listen to and involve our tenants and residents in how we can improve their homes, estates, and services."*



*"We take pride in our commitment to engagement, and we take every opportunity to involve residents in decision making."*

To receive the Tpas Exemplar Accreditation, the Council had to demonstrate a strong culture of involvement and an ability to drive business improvements for tenants.

The assessment panel were especially impressed by staff commitment to making tenant's voice listened to, with the partnership between the Council

and partner Rotherfed held up as good practice.

Chief Executive of Tpas, Jenny Osbourne, added:

*"We are delighted that Rotherham Council has successfully been accredited with Tpas three times and completed a meticulous process to become an Exemplar Accredited housing organisation."*

*"Rotherham Council have demonstrated their continuing commitment to the values we share. Tpas believe that involving tenants in all aspects of service delivery in the housing sector is not only the right thing to do but also makes great business sense. We look forward to sharing the stories of how Rotherham have continuously used the accreditation process to achieve success by working together with tenants."*

# THEME 2: LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Council's leadership is positively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the borough. Right across the Council our leadership is working with partners, community groups and local organisations to achieve real impact for all residents.

*Key achievements in 2022/23 have included:*

## Championing events supporting equality and inclusion

Throughout 2022, the Council and its local partner organisations have championed equalities by actively informing and involving local residents, including underrepresented groups, in opportunities for participation.

Rotherham is proud to have been a host city in delivering a record-breaking **UEFA Women's Euros 2022**. As one of nine host cities, Rotherham supported the continued growth of women and girls' football in England. During July, Rotherham's New York Stadium hosted three group games and a quarter final. Rotherham welcomed teams and fans from France, Belgium, Iceland, Italy and the Netherlands, selling 97% of available tickets with thousands of fans in attendance throughout the tournament.

The impact of the Euros is already being felt, with a significant increase in new girls' football teams being set up locally, more women going into coaching and at least 20 local women becoming referees.

The Council proudly partnered with Flux Rotherham and Children's Capital of Culture to host **Women of the World (WOW) Festival Rotherham**. WOW festival is a global movement where woman, girls and non-binary people come together for three days of life-changing

conversations, incredible performances and interactive workshops. The festival created a safe space to discuss a range of topics, challenging societal norms and ideas that create barriers for women to succeed.

Rotherham marked **Holocaust Memorial Day** by holding an event on 27 January, at All Saints Square in the town centre. The event brought together faith leaders, dignitaries, Councillors, schools, and local residents to remember all those who lost their lives to genocides around the world. The theme of this year's event was 'ordinary people.' The theme aims to encourage people to think how ordinary people can play a bigger part in challenging prejudice today.



Other events supported:

- **Black History Month** (coordinated by the internal BME Workers Network).
- **'Dishes of Rotherham'** project.
- **The Rotherham Show.**
- **Ramadan Events.**
- **National Day for Disabled People.**
- **International Women's Day** (delivered in partnership with the internal Women's Workforce Network).

## **Involving local partner organisations in the development of the Rotherham Plan 2025**

The Rotherham Plan sets out how the Council and local partner organisations will work together to deliver an ambitious programme of activity through to 2025.

To help inform this, a number of facilitated focus groups were held in April and May 2022: four groups aimed at members of thematic partnership boards and three for partner staff. These sessions informed the plan's themes and its core principles.

Additionally, a public consultation was carried out during September 2022. This involved face-to-face engagement with residents across a range of venues, including the Rotherham Show, as well as an online survey. Collectively these exercises achieved a total of 313 responses.

On 30 January 2023, the plan was launched at the University Centre Rotherham, where over 80 local partner organisations and businesses came together to celebrate Rotherham's achievements and hear about existing initiatives in the pipeline.

## **Rotherham's leaders pledge to work towards becoming a breastfeeding friendly borough**

The Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed plans for Rotherham to work towards a breastfeeding friendly borough status. Local health partners and the Council's children and young people's services will work together to ensure parents make informed and supported choices when it comes to caring for their children.

The commitment to become a breastfeeding friendly borough includes supporting local businesses and public transport partners to provide environments where parents feel encouraged to breastfeed if they want to. Furthermore, partners will also work with leisure centres, restaurants and shopping centres to welcome breastfeeding parents, as well as encouraging the general public to be supportive in any of these environments.

## **Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2022-2025**

The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRF) is the borough's community safety partnership, bringing together organisations such as the Council, South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Probation Service.

The plan outlines a number of commitments based around four key priorities, which the partnership will focus on over the next three years. This includes: protecting vulnerable children and adults; building safer and stronger communities; protecting people from violence; and tackling organised crime.

Specific outcomes include:

- Over 1,700 mental health support interventions delivered between April 2019 and March 2022, ensuring adults with mental health needs were provided with, or signposted to, the most appropriate support, reducing their vulnerability to becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

## CASE STUDY:

### **Living my best life,' the new Castle View facility**

**Cabinet members at Rotherham Council approved plans for a new day centre in Canklow to provide day opportunities for people with high support needs. Under the banner of 'Living my best life,' the new Castle View facility on Warden Street will be supporting people with complex support needs, and acting as a hub for wider community activity, learning and skill development.**

The modern, multifunctional building will be in easy reach of the local community, businesses and amenities that will enhance the day opportunities offer and support the service to integrate within the heart of the local community. The activities at Castle View will be complimented by community outreach

across the borough to support access to local communities, ensuring people receive the right flexible support, in the right place, at the right time.

Plans for the new service came following a period of consultation with existing service users, their carers and families, which highlighted the importance of the right support, in the right environment with the opportunity to 'live my best life' through creating new experiences that maximises potential.

Councillor David Roche, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health said:

*"Empowering people to lead independent and fulfilling lives is at the heart of our learning disability transformation programme. These plans are a key pillar of that strategy, alongside providing support for people with disabilities to access employment and housing.*

*"We are looking forward to working with the people who currently use our services to design and develop the facilities at Castle View, and*

*the programme of activities that we will run there.*

*The site offers so much potential for development including space to create allotment areas and sensory gardens, and because of its size, it will allow for more flexibility on how the space is used, which enables us to be creative and innovative with the services we offer."*



## CASE STUDY:

### **Rotherham Council named the most improved Council in the country at the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2022**

**The prestigious annual event honoured local authorities and individuals from across the UK in 22 categories, culminating in a ceremony in London on 20 July 2022.**

The prestigious annual event honoured local authorities and individuals from across the UK in 22 categories, culminating in a ceremony in London on 20 July 2022.

Rotherham Council was named Most Improved Council in recognition of the huge progress the authority has made over a number of years. The judges unanimously agreed that “from a rock bottom position it is possible to

rebuild the trust of the community through understanding, courage and openness.”

The Council was represented at the event by members of staff who had won the ‘Big Hearts Big Changes’ Employee Awards, which celebrate the achievements of employees from across the organisation.

Councillor Chris Read, Leader of Rotherham Council, said:

*“This recognition from the wider local government community is testimony to all the work that has been undertaken by our staff, councillors, and partners. I am delighted for them.”*

*“We’ve come a long way over the last eight years, under an unprecedented level of scrutiny and against a declining level of resource, and it is their commitment and dedication to our community that has driven the improvements we’ve seen and will continue to see in the future.”*

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive of Rotherham Council, said: “It is pleasing that the fundamental changes and significant improvements that the Council has made have been recognised by our peers. This will inspire all of us to keep driving improvements for the communities we serve.”





## CASE STUDY:

### The ‘Places to Go and Things to Do’ – a new universal youth offer for young people in Rotherham

**The Council is committed to having an inclusive universal youth offer so that all children and young people have fun things to do and safe places to go across Rotherham.**

As part of this inclusive universal offer, the Council provides youth work provision across the borough, working in partnership with the voluntary sector. Activities are currently delivered by 17 voluntary sector agencies who have been commissioned to offer universal youth work sessions during 2022/2023. In conjunction with these commissioned sessions, the Council successfully launched the new universal youth offer website ‘Places to Go and

Things to Do’ in November 2022. The ‘Places to Go and Things to Do’ website enables the Council to give details of what Universal Youth Work commissioned provision is available, as well as providing a ‘what’s on and when’ guide for young people, their parents, and carers. This allows for everyone to see the breadth of opportunities and activities that are available across Rotherham. Since the launch of the website, the landing page has been viewed 989 times.

The ‘Places to Go and Things to Do’ website was launched following consultation with partners, young people, and families at the Rotherham Show in September 2022 and is now updated termly to ensure that the information presented is as accurate and as accessible as possible.

The Council and its partners continue to widen the activities on offer across communities and create positive outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham. Activities

on offer include biking, football, and cooking, with provision taking place across all areas of the borough. In 2022/23 over 1,000 additional youth sessions were delivered across Rotherham, providing a safe space for young people to enjoy a variety of activities. Through structured youth work, group leaders also offer support to young people to develop life skills, raise aspiration and encourage positive community engagement, which contributes to preventing anti-social and offending behaviour.



## CASE STUDY:

### Carers Week: 6 -12 June 2022

**Carers Week is a national, annual campaign, supported by organisations including Carers Trust and Carers UK, during which events and activities are held to raise awareness of the challenges faced by unpaid carers and recognise the contribution that unpaid carers make to society.**

During 6 -12 June 2022 Carers Week, the Council organised an event, in partnership with Crossroads Care Rotherham, to offer information, support and advice to Rotherham's unpaid carers. The event was advertised throughout the borough via social media, although its town centre location meant that it was highly visible on the day.

The following organisations took part in this event:

- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**
- **Crossroads Care Rotherham**
- **Rotherham Carers Forum**
- **Rotherham Barnardo's Young Carers**
- **Rotherham Sight & Sound**

The event took place on 7 June 2022, in an outside stall next to Crossroads Care, The Corner, in All Saints Square, Rotherham; information leaflets from the above agencies were on display, and staff were available to answer any questions or queries. For those who wished to make a one-to-one appointment with a member of staff, the Crossroads Care training room was made available throughout the day, and there was also the opportunity for carers to arrange telephone appointments for a later date.

Between all of the partners, over one hundred contacts with unpaid carers were recorded: twenty-one carers were seen by Crossroads

Care, most of whom later received follow up calls that provided advice, information, and signposting to other services; and fourteen carers were provided with one to-one support at The Corner by other organisations, including information about the Carers UK grant, carers assessments, and carers support groups in Rotherham. This shows that a large number of carers were able to obtain accurate advice and information and / or were signposted to other organisations on the day. The individual organisations gave their own direct contact details to carers, to allow them to make contact at their own pace.



# THEME 3: RESPONSIVE SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE

**Through effective planning and service delivery the Council ensures services are accessible to all customers. We are using our commissioning and procurement processes to provide more employment and training opportunities to all residents no matter their protected characteristic.**

*Key achievements in 2022/23 have included:*

## **Supporting our most vulnerable during the cost-of-living crisis**

Cost-of-living pressures are having a detrimental impact nationwide, especially on the most vulnerable in our society. This year the Council's Cabinet committed £24m to support vulnerable residents with the rising cost of living. Some of the schemes and activities are set out below. In addition, our Employment Solutions team have provided holistic support to enable nearly 1,000 residents to secure sustainable employment or access accredited training.

**Energy crisis support scheme:** awarded payments of up to £400 per household to 5,294 applicants who struggled to meet the costs of their energy bills.

**Council Tax support top up scheme:** provides up to £117.60 of additional support to low-income households through reduced Council Tax bills.

**Warm Welcome spaces:** since the launch of the Warm Welcome spaces initiative in 2022, libraries have provided a warm welcome to over 2,400 people across the borough. 15 library sites have been involved in the

scheme, opening for a combined total of 571 hours to enable people in the community to keep warm during the winter months.

Along with providing activities and hot drinks for users, libraries have also partnered with local voluntary and community groups to provide advice and support for residents.

RotherFed has delivered energy know how sessions at Greasbrough, Riverside and Mowbray Gardens libraries, while Maltby library has worked with Yorkshire Sport to enhance their "warm hub" project, which supports both the leisure centre and library as warm spaces for people to come and use facilities.

**Winter food hampers:** £44,000 was awarded to local voluntary groups to provide Christmas/New Year food hampers for around 500 vulnerable households.

**Food vouchers:** the Council has been funding the voucher scheme for families of local children entitled to benefits-related free school meals since October 2020.

12,000 families received lifeline supermarket vouchers to help them with the cost of food for their children during the Easter school holiday 2023. The value of the vouchers equated to £15 per week, the approximate amount it costs to provide a meal for each child when they are in school.

In March 2023, the Council's Cabinet agreed to allocate an extra £2.5m to extend the scheme by a further year, up to and including the Easter school holidays in 2024.



## Equalities considerations are driving service planning

The Council has refreshed its service plan templates to integrate equality priorities into all actions. These changes enable equalities to be identified in all stages of service planning. In achieving this, service plans incorporate building a better understanding of our communities through engaging with residents; making services more accessible; advancing EDI considering the barriers some sections of our community may face; supporting teams to be more diverse; and effectively engaging with teams.

## Inclusion and social value

Since launching in October 2019 our social value policy has helped vulnerable residents enter training and employment opportunities through contractual commitments from our suppliers.

Social & Local  
Economic Value  
Committed

**£13.5 Million**



**£97.4 Million** spent on local  
suppliers in 2021/2022



**1,500 + weeks** of skills and  
training opportunities committed



**302 employees** to be hired or  
retrained



**2,671 tonnes** CO2e savings on  
contracts

Social value commitments have enabled vulnerable residents to secure employment opportunities, including:

- **12** employees who are long term unemployed.
- **5** employees who are not in employment, education or employment.
- **3** employees aged 18 -25 who were rehabilitating young offenders.
- **4** disabled employees.

Other commitments comprise:

- **1,903 hours** of dedicated support for getting people back into work.
- **989 weeks** of training opportunities for local residents.
- **6,801 hours** dedicated to supporting young people into work.
- **310 weeks** to be spent on work placements or pre-employment courses.
- **238 work** placement weeks paying the minimum or national living wage.

The Council is an accredited Real Living Wage employer, directly benefitting over **3,000 employees**, with a requirement for all qualifying contracts to be Real Living Wage compliant. The approach to social value directly interrelates with equality objectives by helping to address socio-economic inequalities, aiming to build local economic resilience.



## CASE STUDY:

### Esh Construction delivering employability sessions

**Between March 2021 and March 2022, Esh Construction Ltd delivered contracts for transportation infrastructure schemes for Rotherham Council.**

As part of their social value commitments to Rotherham Council, Esh Construction provided training and employment opportunities to local residents with a focus on young people. They provided access to jobs and helped people to expand their career aspirations by working directly with young people within the vicinity of the construction sites. Esh have delivered a variety of social value by hosting employability sessions, work experience preparation sessions, careers fairs, conducting site visits with students, delivering construction in the curriculum lessons, and donating a defibrillator to a local community centre. The examples below highlight the Social Value delivered on one project.

In total, Esh completed 282 hours of employability sessions with Better Learners Better Workers (BLBW) at Wath Academy. Megan Roberts, Social Value Manager and Hannah Skill, Social Value Coordinator delivered the session to a Year 9 assembly of approximately 280 students. This provided students with an insight into Esh's career and study pathway, the variety of roles within the construction sector, transferable employability skills and introductory guidance on the routes into construction. Students were also given the

chance to learn how Megan progressed in her own career at Esh Construction.

**Feedback from the Work Placement and Employability Coordinator:** *"The learners in today's session were really engaged and asked lots of questions. They have been able to develop their confidence especially when discussing what they are proud of. The session also allowed them to talk more about their own skills and learn more about the construction industry and roles within the industry, especially within ESH group."*



## CASE STUDY:

### Conway Crescent

**Conway Crescent is a state-of-the-art respite service with assistive technology providing greater opportunities for those with caring responsibilities to access short breaks.**

The four-bedroom detached houses, completed in Spring 2021, replaced older properties in East Herringthorpe which were not fully accessible and couldn't meet the needs of individuals with more complex needs. Both houses at Conway Crescent have lifts, one house is fitted with ceiling hoists and the other provides an autism-friendly environment.

Two years on from completion the service has gone from strength to strength, now offering a respite and short-stay service to over 50 customers, providing numerous benefits including increased social interaction, new experiences, and a change of scenery boosting health, wellbeing, and mood. For carers this provides the opportunity to attend events, take a holiday, or simply enjoy a few days to rest. Recently a carer got in touch to say they'd had a "wonderful holiday", enabling them to fully "re-charge their batteries" whilst their daughter had a lovely respite stay at Conway.

In addition to the above, respite breaks are enjoyed on a frequent basis giving people the chance to get to know other service users and make long-lasting friendships.

The progression over the past 2 years has led to Conway recently receiving an encouraging evaluation following inspection from CQC. Moreover it increasingly garners consistently positive feedback from carers who have praised the service - in particular the staff that make it.

The CQC Conway evaluation stated that customers, "...appeared to be comfortable in the company of staff, and staff spoke to them with respect and warmth". The report also quoted relatives who told the inspectors that Conway is, "...a great place. He (the customer) sees it as his holiday and loves to go there. He enjoys making friends, likes his room, does activities, and joins in with the karaoke." The report finally went on to say that, "The support people received was tailored to them personally, respecting their equality and diversity rights".

It is fantastic to see Conway receiving a 'Good' rating following inspection, with Registered Manager Joanne Ratcliffe motivated to go one step further and achieve an 'Outstanding' rating in the future.

Joanne said that, "Conways vision is to work in partnership with customers, relatives, carers, and others to provide a range of services which recognise and respond to individual social, cultural, spiritual and emotional needs. Conway aims to assist and encourage customers to exercise their rights to privacy, dignity, independence, security, choice, and to preserve their rights as citizens of Rotherham."

Conway is also a flexible and versatile service, supporting emergency admissions wherever possible. Conway recently supported a customer until his permanent Supported Living placement was finalised. The staff received a delightful card from the customer and his family, thanking the team for everything they had done during his time at Conway.



## CASE STUDY:

### Sparking Wonder, Making Connections'

**Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage was successful with an Arts Council England project grant to redesign its intergenerational early years programme with partners and families.**

Officers worked with partners such as Early Help and BME Young Carers to consult and identify priorities, issues that may impact on their lives, relevant stories and spaces that matter to communities.

The 'Sparking Wonder, Making Connections' project sought to using the Museum's collections, spaces, and stories to address key social outcomes around improving accessibility, health and wellbeing and equality and inclusion. The project aimed to reach families with young children who came from a variety of geographical, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds across Rotherham and enabled

these families to create their own unique programmes of activity, whilst embedding long-term connections to the museum. This was done by co-producing collections-based experiences and activities with the families, local and national artists, and early years practitioners, supported by training from health and wellbeing experts and advisors in anti-racist practice.

The project worked with families from some of the most economically deprived wards in Rotherham and those most impacted by social isolation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the families engaged with contained children with diverse needs and adults with English as a second language who required interpreters and additional support. The project worked with a wide range of family groups and organisations, including BME Young Carers, Ferham Primary School, a Rotherham Early Help toddler group, and young mothers from YWCA Yorkshire.

The service made connections with families who had not previously engaged with them

before, developing a better understanding of their social and cultural experiences, as well as the challenges and barriers they face in their communities. As a result, the service has created new programmes that strengthen family connections based on their priorities, individual needs, personal interests, and cultural heritage. Through the programme, the service has also embedded health and wellbeing, inclusion, and sensory approaches in all of its activities – creating fun and positive experiences for families to share together.





# THEME 4: DIVERSE & ENGAGED WORKFORCE

**The Council will continue to improve workplace equality and diversity through the delivery of the Workforce Plan 2022-2025. This includes a commitment to supporting the workforce with inclusive working practices, health and wellbeing support and learning and development.**

The Workforce Plan outlines the key priorities that will help to support the delivery of the Council Plan through developing the capacity and skills of the workforce. We want to ensure, as an employer, we demonstrate how we provide a good work life balance and the range of benefits available which mean that individuals want to work for us; and when they do work for us that they feel developed, valued and supported. These things combined will support our aim of both attracting and retaining a talented workforce so that we serve our borough well.

*Key Workforce Plan achievements in 2022/23 include:*

- Creating eight EDI staff networks to drive activity forward.
- Improving the recruitment, applicant and manager experience.
- Employability initiatives including Kickstart, development of the work experience pathway, internships, and the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP).
- Refreshing our corporate induction programme.
- Launching an improved approach to exit interviews.
- Ongoing rolling programme of HR policy refresh.
- Launching the Management Development Programme.
- Delivering Employee Opinion Survey action plans in each service.

More detail on key achievements are noted below.

## Recruitment

Following the launch of the Council's updated Workforce Plan, a range of activity has been undertaken to ensure the Council draws from the widest possible talent pool when attracting new recruits. By engaging with existing staff, managers, new recruits and those on Kickstart placements, the Council has updated its recruitment marketing material with a particular focus on using videos to support recruitment campaigns. This is in addition to a new recruitment brochure that includes key information on the Council, employee benefits and the borough.

In addition, the online recruitment has been simplified using a shortened application form. For frontline services, we have trialled alternative, accessible recruitment methods including offline application forms,



recruitment days, working alongside Jobcentre Plus to ensure jobseekers are aware of opportunities in the Council.

Further action will be undertaken during 2023 to engage directly with community groups to raise the profile of career opportunities available with the Council and to seek further feedback on how we can adapt recruitment and selection processes that are accessible to all. The Council will also continue engaging with schools, colleges, universities and DWP to widen the talent pool of potential candidates and expand the number of opportunities available through apprenticeships, T Level and university placements aligned to career pathways that are aligned to critical roles.

## Staff Networks

Eight staff networks based on the protected characteristics were launched in September 2022. The networks offer an opportunity for Council employees to come together to discuss and debate topics of interest. The networks are led by people at different levels across the organisation, enabling more diverse voices to influence change. There is a direct connection from staff networks into the organisation's Equalities Steering Group, to ensure that the delivery of the EDI Strategy runs through everything we do. Feedback from these networks will be used to improve internal communications, consultations, employee experience and engagement mechanisms.

### *Networks formed include:*

- Black and Minority Ethnic Workers (BME) Network.
- Carers Support Network.
- Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions (LTHC) Network.
- United Faith Network.
- LGBTQ+ Network.
- Neurodivergent Network.
- Women's Workforce Network.
- Young Employees Network.

## Kickstart scheme

The Council is committed to delivering the Workforce Plan aim to become an Employer of Choice, which includes increasing our reputation in Rotherham's communities and appealing to young people. The Council has employed 64 young people under the scheme, which aimed to reduce the risk of long-term unemployment by providing six-month paid job opportunities to 16–24-year-olds claiming Universal Credit. A range of young people with a wide variety of skills were employed to help deliver services across the Council, from HR and IT to cultural services and social care. The Council received an award from the Department for Work and Pensions for being the biggest single Kickstart employer in South Yorkshire.

The Council worked in partnership with RNN College Group on the scheme, with the college providing three days of training and support to the Kickstart employees. Since the scheme ended in September 2022, at least 75 % of the

young people who were taken on by the Council have secured longer-term paid jobs, moved into self-employment, or gone back to education. That number includes 25 young people who have secured jobs at the Council.

## **Work Placements**

As an organisation we are actively engaged in initiatives to encourage and support young people in gaining valuable work experience and skills within the workplace to give them a great start to their career. We work with teams who connect into schools and colleges across Rotherham's communities to ensure that the placements are targeted.

We have recently finalised a new process for students to request work experience which makes it easy for anyone to request a work placement.. Since this was launched in November 2022, 24 work placements have been completed or confirmed. We also facilitate various internships throughout Council services, including University placements and working with our local colleges to provide supported internships.

We are working with Rotherham College as they develop their T Level offer and will be taking placement students in a number of areas. This helps us to show young people the work the Council does in order for them to consider RMBC as a longer-term employer.

## **Apprenticeships**

The Workforce Plan outlines the Council's commitment to developing the workforce through apprenticeships and our 'apprenticeship first' approach. As part of our aim to become an Employer of Choice, offering apprenticeships is a great way of appealing to young people who want

to earn whilst they learn, and can be more accessible for those who are unable or do not want to go down the traditional qualification routes. As an organisation, we can develop apprentices into the workers we want as a huge part of our succession plans, whilst they bring new ideas and skills to the table as part of their learning.

The Council currently have 142 apprenticeship learners within our workforce (as of March 2023); this is a mixture of both current members of staff wanting to develop their skills and knowledge in their area of work, and new starters to the Council who are learning and training in a profession from scratch. The apprenticeships undertaken are at level 2 to level 7 and are varied, from business administration to civil engineering, finance management to highways maintenance, housing to children's residential practitioners.

## **Graduate Scheme**

The Council has participated in the LGA's National Graduate Development Scheme since 2017. Graduates are recruited each autumn on a two-year contract and complete a programme of 3 placements across the Council in that time - example areas are Housing, Commissioning (both Adults and Children's), Community Safety and Street Scene.

Feedback received from participants and managers has always been positive, with graduates making a real impact on services and priorities by working on key projects. A total of 23 graduates have been employed through the scheme so far. There are currently 7 graduates remaining as National Management Trainees on the two active scheme cohorts, with recruitment underway for the next cohort to begin in autumn 2023.

Retention of talent from the scheme has also been a success for the Council: 4 out of 5 graduates from the 2021 cohort have already secured permanent jobs within the Council, and from the previous cohorts overall (12 graduates in total), 7 of those individuals are still working for the Council now.

## Workforce engagement

The Council is committed to enhancing the employee experience for all staff by listening and responding to staff feedback. The regular Employee Opinion Survey is the way in which the organisation measures employee



engagement. The survey also allows us to breakdown engagement scores using equalities information, which helps further target EDI activity. Following the last survey in 2021, services have developed targeted action plans to make progress and highlight where progress is being made.

## Key commitments for 23-24:

- Develop staff networks further to make an impact on cross-cutting issues across the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.
- Establish a Reverse Mentoring Scheme between Staff Networks and EDI Steering Group Leads to ensure voices of underrepresented groups are heard.
- Refresh the Performance Development Review approach to strengthen conversations between managers and staff around wellbeing, development, objectives, and performance.
- Engage groups in a review of Rotherham's values and embed values into employee lifecycle and experience.
- Equip the organisation with equalities workforce data to continually inform approaches taken throughout all levels of RMBC.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of EDI in the workforce, by reviewing and improving the training offer for officers Making Rotherham Council an employer of choice.

## CASE STUDY:

### Women's Workforce Network Creating Positive Change

**The Women's Workforce Network (WWN) was launched in 2022 to positively help the Council's commitment to seeing a borough based on equality and social justice.**

The network meets on a monthly basis and aims to represent women of all protected characteristics working in the Council. The network also provides a friendly, supportive, safe space for women to share their experiences, ask questions and discuss topics that affect women in the workplace.

Other aims include:

- Creating a safe environment where people from across the Council can come together and discuss issues of importance to them.
- Connecting other people who share the same passion for raising the voice of women across the workforce.

- Supporting women to challenge practices and policies that affect them in the workplace.

The Women's Workforce Network contributed towards the successful delivery of an International Women's Day event, which was held at the Town Hall on 8th March 2023. The network created promotional material e.g., posters and leaflets to advertise the event to internal employees and inform how they can be involved in future meetings.

The theme for International Women's Day 2023 was 'Embrace Equity'. The event reflected on how we can all embrace equity in Rotherham, focusing particularly on sport participation and employment.

During the event, employees heard from a range of inspirational female speakers and Rotherham role models. This included Val Hoyle, Rotherham United Women's Football Club, Glennis Leathwood, Rotherham Council, Deborah Bullivant, Grimm and Co, Sharon Kemp, Rotherham Council.

The event left employees feeling empowered and optimistic whilst increasing both the awareness and membership of WWN. The

network continues to drive forward women's issues in the workplace, the networks chair discussed with other members the issue of women's toilet facilities at Riverside House needing emergency sanitary products as currently they weren't available.

Through conversations with the network, facilities team, and senior leadership the matter was dealt with, and rectified and emergency sanitary products are now being trialled at Riverside House. This was not only an achievement for the network but for all women working at this venue.



# LOOKING AHEAD

This section provides a sample of actions linked to the annual equality, diversity, and inclusion plan for 2023/2024, working towards the medium-term priorities set out in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. The action plan draws primarily from the Council's Year Ahead Delivery Plan to identify where equality outcomes are embedded in Council Plan priorities. Other actions are drawn from themes across the EFLG.

## **THEME I: UNDERSTANDING, LISTENING TO AND WORKING WITH ROTHERHAM'S COMMUNITIES**

### **The Council will listen to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve service delivery**

Involving communities in Council decision-making processes is key to ensuring residents' interests are represented. In 2023/24, the community reference group will be refreshed. This group is made up of community and faith leaders who advise and discuss issues on behalf of the communities and people they support.

The Council has invested in a new post to lead 3 projects ensuring hard to reach communities and underrepresented groups' voices are heard. This will support the Council's goal of creating a new model for consultation and engagement with a specific focus on building stronger networks around EDI. This new model will make it easier for the Council and partner organisations to understand the impact of cost-of-living pressures on those with protected characteristics, including additional or tailored support that may be required for diverse groups. It will also enable excluded groups to influence and access service provision.

### **Implementing effective consultation toolkit training**

Training to implement the new Consultation and Engagement Framework and Toolkit is underway. The training will empower officers to engage and work confidently with the public, groups, organisations, and partners in a co-ordinated way. Training will be delivered through virtual workshops and an online course produced by Virtual College.

### **Using census data and online resources**

Following release of the 2021 census data, ward profiles will accurately be updated to reflect the new communities the Council serves. Ward profiles show economic and social data about all of Rotherham's 25 wards. The data covers: language, employment, education, health, and housing.

The Council will launch an online resource in 2024 for families to access support in relation to their emotional health and wellbeing. An equality and needs analysis has been undertaken for the online resource, which considers accessibility across all communities in Rotherham and will introduce programmes and practice that are tailored to all communities in Rotherham.



## THEME 2: LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

### The Council will continue championing and celebrating diversity

The Council will continue to celebrate the diversity of its communities by proactively promoting recognised dates through the Council's website and social media channels, including:

- Black History Month.
- International Women's Day.
- Ramadan.
- LGBTQ+ Pride.
- Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Rotherham Show.
- National Day for Disabled People.
- South Asian Heritage Month.

The Council will work with children and young people across the borough to co-design the Children's Capital of Culture programme and deliver a series of events:

- UPLIFT: Rotherham Skate and Arts Festival 2025.
- Teenager market Quarter 1.
- WOW festival.

### Member development activities

In 2023 we will continue to support equality, diversity and inclusion training as part of member induction and development activities. Our members play an important and active role in reducing inequality, fostering good relations across communities. Activities will include member sessions around specific equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

### Tackling health inequalities and community safety

The Council will launch a new prevention campaign that will provide advice on all areas of health, such as smoking, tobacco control, food, and physical activity. Furthermore, the Council will collaborate with local partners to design a new delivery model for mental health services to improve the needs of those in crisis.

The Council will continue to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies to address issues around community safety, including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.



### **THEME 3: DELIVERING ACCESSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE SERVICES THAT MEET DIVERSE NEEDS**

**The Council will continue to conduct equality training and address issues around community safety.**

Following the successful delivery of the equality analysis training for OSMB and cabinet members in 2022, the Council will continue to deliver similar training to the newly formed equality, diversity, and inclusion operational group alongside equality champions. Equality champions and operational group members based within directorates will function as key points of contact for equality-related enquiries and guidance.

The Council will progress phase 1 of the local neighbourhood road safety programme to design and implement new road safety measures in 13 wards. Additionally, the Council will complete delivery of the second phase of CCTV investment using safer streets funding. The Council will collaborate with local partners to deliver a communications campaign, promoting access to enforcement services.



### **THEME 4: ENSURING A DIVERSE, SUPPORTED AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE**

**The Council will continue to improve workplace equality and diversity through the delivery of the Workforce Plan 2022-2025.**

Using the workforce plan 2022-25, the Council will have a refreshed focus on apprenticeships and entry level roles to develop a talent pool of young employees across the Council. The Council will implement the management development programme, ensuring all managers have a clear understanding of how to effectively lead teams and respond to employee health and wellbeing issues.

The Council will create a forward plan of learning and development opportunities based on feedback and intelligence from employee opinion surveys and other forms of consultation, including seeking views from staff representation networks.

The Council will continue to work with the internal staff representation networks to create positive change. Staff networks will be embedded into governance structures, such as the equality, diversity, and inclusion strategic and operational group, allowing suggestions and concerns from networks to be considered and acted upon more quickly.

