

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 23 January 2023
Report for: Information
Report of: Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing & Equalities

Report Title

Progress Report for the Corporate Equality Strategy 2021 to 2025

Summary

The Equality Strategy was launched in January 2021 with four key objectives. This report provides the third progress update on achievements since the Strategy was launched.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Executive:

- 1. Note the contents of the report; and**
- 2. Approves the proposal that a further progress report containing updates on the success measures within the Corporate Equality Strategy is presented in July 2023.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	There is a Strategy and Action Plan to deliver the Council's Equality duty and its corporate priorities, reducing health inequalities, supporting people out of poverty and addressing the climate crisis. Increased equality will support the delivery of all these priorities
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The Strategy and Action Plan is in line with GM and national equality strategies and frameworks
Financial	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report
Legal Implications:	Outlined in the body of the report
Equality/Diversity Implications	The aim of the Strategy and Action Plan is to meet our equalities duty
Sustainability Implications	There is nothing in the report that would undermine our sustainability plans
Carbon Reduction	The Equality Strategy aims to improve life opportunities which can assist in supporting carbon reduction
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	No direct impact
Risk Management Implications	This reduces the risk of the Council being exposed to discrimination claims caused by failure to demonstrate compliance with equalities legislation
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Health and wellbeing will be improved through the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan through improved access to services and opportunities. In addition, by monitoring of outcomes among protected groups, we will be able to target interventions effectively.
Health and Safety Implications	No direct impact

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Corporate Equality Strategy for Trafford Council and Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) 2021-2025 was launched in January 2021. From 1st July 2022 Trafford CCG no longer existed and a new statutory organisation, Greater Manchester Integrated Care, was established. The Equality Strategy demonstrates the commitment to improve equality of opportunity for our residents, colleagues and partners which is a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 for public bodies such as the Council and NHS GM (Trafford).
- 1.2 Since publication of the Equality Strategy, reporting on progress with the Strategy is bi-annual to the Executive of the Council and to NHS GM (Trafford) Senior Leadership Team. There is not currently a Greater Manchester ICB Equality Strategy in place, so until one is in place the Trafford locality will continue to work towards the objectives in the Trafford joint strategy. Actions and progression towards the objectives will be reported in the Equality and Inclusion Steering Group Meetings.

Going forward there is an expectation that the Trafford locality will contribute to the creation of a Greater Manchester Equality Strategy and once that has been agreed will report progressions to the GM Equality Function.

- 1.3 This report provides a progress update on Council achievements since the last report presented to Executive Committee in July 2022.

2.0 Governance and Progress Review

- 2.1 The Corporate Equality Steering and Working Groups established in July 2021 continue to meet bi-monthly. The Executive Portfolio Holder attends the Equality Steering Group on a quarterly basis. The Corporate Equality Steering Group has links to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Trafford NHS ICB Locality.

- 2.2 The Equality Working Group has successfully recruited additional Equality Champions for each directorate who compliment the Staff Group leads and whose role is to communicate key messages about the equality work programme and encourage involvement, delivery etc. where applicable.

2.3 Citizens Survey – Moving on from ‘BAME’ Terminology

The Focus Group tasked with exploring what it means for the Council to no longer use the term ‘BAME’, (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) in our Council documents has continued to meet regularly. This was in response to guidance from the Government and GMCA suggesting that public bodies no longer use the term ‘BAME’ in council documents and recommend that they use the term ‘ethnic minorities.’ The Focus Group felt it was important to widen consultation, particularly with people from ethnically diverse backgrounds working and living in our borough about the Government’s suggestion, as public bodies have the flexibility to consult with their residents on this subject.

- 2.3.1 The Focus Group designed some questions for a Citizens Survey entitled ‘Moving on from BAME Terminology’, the results of which will be used to help the Council determine an acceptable and appropriate term to use in the Council’s future documents and publications. The questions in the Survey and the consultation approach adopted included holding small focus group meetings with local organisations. The Survey was published for four weeks from 3rd to 31st October.

- 2.3.2 There were 312 respondents overall. When compared to consultations which took place over a similar length of time, this is a much higher than average rate. There was a good cross section of people who responded, in terms of ethnicity and age. For example, A small majority of people (54%) identified as White British, against the overall make-up of the borough of 77.8.% who identify as white.

With regards to whether we should avoid using BAME, it was clear that most people agreed with the statement, with 74% agreeing overall and little variance between the different groupings. There was a clear preferred term for all the groups that completed the survey and this was for ‘Ethnically Diverse Communities’, with this being ranked in the top two in all groups.

A report summarising the findings of the Citizens Survey feedback, the analysis and the recommendation for a new term which the majority of respondents preferred is currently being finalised. This report will be brought to Executive February/March 2023.

2.3.3 In the meantime, Trafford Council have continued to use the term 'BAME' in the short-term until there is agreement on the newly proposed term and an agreed approach on how to implement the use of this in our documents. Where possible the use of more specific terms to describe ethnicity will be used in documents and publications.

2.4 Anti-Racism Policy and Managing 3rd Party Abuse Policy

2.4.1 Work continues to be carried out on the drafting of a corporate Anti-Racism Policy for dealing with Policy incidents of racial abuse towards staff from other staff or clients/customers with input from Children's and Adults Social Work Practitioners. Alongside this a new policy entitled 'Managing 3rd Party Violence and Abuse of Staff' has been drafted which is currently with the unions for comment.

2.4.2 These documents are designed to help managers and staff address the complex issues that arise especially when clients behave in an abusive way towards staff but the Council is legally obliged to provide a statutory service such as in Adults and Children's Social Care. Focus is on the support for the individual/s affected and there will be practice guidance. Both are nearing completion but will need wider circulation for feedback before holding a launch which we aim to hold in the coming year.

2.5 The Principal Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer brings regular updates from the GM Equality Officers and Equality Alliance to these Equality Groups. This enables links to be made between the GM Equality Strategy and that of the Equality Action Plan.

2.5.1 Recently data from the GM Big Disability Cost of Living Survey 2022 was published by the GM Disabled People's panel. The Survey ran from the end of June until early August, and 1,495 responses were from disabled people living within Greater Manchester. The survey results show the cumulative impact of austerity, pandemic and now cost of living on disabled residents in GM.

2.5.2 In response to the survey findings and recommendations, the Council's Chief Executive presented a report to the GMCA Wider Leadership Team with a proposal to establish a Task and Finish group to develop and drive forward a programme of actions aimed at improving the lives of disabled people in Greater Manchester. The work of the group will focus on the key areas from the Big Disability Survey 2022 as they relate to the lives of disabled people in GM, namely:

- Money, Bills and Food
- Social Care and Personal Assistance
- Housing and Where People Live
- Accessibility, Transport and Lifestyle
- Problem Solving and Support
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Health Services
- Education and Employment

GM colleagues will be reaching out to Equality Strategy lead officers in GM to gather more feedback on what is happening across the districts. This mapping work will be used to help shape the format of the Task and Finish Group mentioned above.

Please see Appendix (1) for a summary of the Big Disability Survey findings and the list of recommendations.

- 2.5.3 Breakthrough UK have been commissioned to support the roll-out of a project to co-produce a framework for a set of Workforce Standards of Inclusion for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. This work will be carried out in Greater Manchester’s healthcare sector and Greater Manchester Local Authorities and includes a survey and upcoming focus groups. The framework will be a clear set of guidelines to make workforces more inclusive.
- 2.5.4 There are plans at GM level to establish a single EDI platform or portal to share information and practice which could become the GM Equality Alliance Equality Framework.
- 2.5.5 The Principal Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer has been invited to join the Greater Manchester Race Equality Strategy Co-Design Workshop taking place in January 2023. Members of the GM Race Equality Panel, the VCSE Leadership Group (Race Equality sub-group) will also be present, and other stakeholders, including GMP, Greater Manchester NHS. Key aims of the Strategy include the following:
- Challenge decision-makers to prioritise tackling racial inequalities across a broad range of policy areas, ensuring ethnicity is a core element of all public service delivery, and sets the tone for wider societal change, by explicitly stating commitment to tackling racial inequality and discrimination
 - Support the Race Equality Panel (and communities) to work collaboratively with policymakers, focusing insight, data, and intelligence on priority themes.

Areas that the Strategy will focus on are Education, Employment, Health and Wellbeing and Criminal Justice.

- 2.6 The Staff Groups continue to meet regularly to connect, for peer support and participate / advise on HR initiatives such as the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Training and Campaign Calendar, the Working Well Passport and a survey about the staff parking scheme.

2.7 Working Well Passport

We recognise the differing needs of each of our colleagues within the Council and we encourage our managers to have regular wellbeing conversations to ensure that they know whether there is anything for which team members might need more support with. In order to enhance our offer to staff around support for wellbeing we have developed a ‘working well passport’, which is a voluntary tool that has been developed in collaboration with our staff forum groups, our EPIC Pioneers and unions colleagues.

It is a live document which colleagues can choose to use to detail information about their individual circumstances and needs and any adjustments or changes that have been agreed with their manager. The passport can help to facilitate open and honest discussions between colleagues and their manager about their needs and how we can support them to flourish at work. When a colleague has a change of manager they can share their passport so their new manager understands their needs and they don't have to re-tell their full story again.

2.8 Consideration of parking issues for colleagues living with a disability

The Council offers a car parking scheme where colleagues can pay for a parking space via a month salary deduction – this is cheaper than using local providers. Although there is some additional consideration for colleagues living with a disability, some issues had been raised regarding the scheme by the Staff Disability Group. In order to understand the issues better, and then to explore solutions, a survey was undertaken which was co-designed by the Chairs of the Network. The key themes coming out of the survey were detailed along with proposals to improve the experiences of our staff – there were some changes that could be made that were fairly easy to implement and at low or no cost and some to be explored that would be more challenging. The report was considered by both our Equality Working and Steering Groups and there was support for the first set of recommendations and for the second set to be explored as appropriate in future, i.e., to monitor whether there were continued issues.

2.9 Census 2021

The results of the Census 2021 which relate to the protected characteristic groups in Trafford such as ethnicity and religion are now being published. Some notable findings show the following about Trafford's population.

- The percentage of the white population has decreased by 7.7% from 85.5% in 2011 to 77.8% in 2021.
- The most common non-white broad ethnic group is Asian/Asian British and this has increased 4.7.% from 7.9% in 2011 to 12.6% in 2021.
- The non-white population was 14.5% in 2011 but has increased by 7.8% to 22.3% in 2021.
- In 2021 92.8% of Trafford residents aged three and over declared English as their main language, a person's first or preferred language, a 1.7% decrease from 2011. The top 3 non-English languages in 2021 were Urdu, Polish and Arabic.
- In 2021, 48.4% of Trafford residents described themselves as "Christian", a 15% decrease from 63.4% in 2011. 33.1% declared "No Religion" in 2021, an 11.9% increase from 21.2% in 2011.

Other Census 2021 data is still coming in from the Office of National Statistics, for example, data for health, disability and unpaid carers will be published in 2023. For further details please see the links below.

[CENSUS 2021: Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion \(trafforddatalab.io\)](https://trafforddatalab.io)

[Census 2021 results - Census 2021](#)

The Business Intelligence Unit will be delivering briefings on the Census 2021 findings in 2023 to help us determine what the changes may mean for how we design and deliver our services.

3.0 Meeting our Legal Obligations in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 The Council and the CCG are legally required to publish key Equality Objectives and have agreed the following which are included in the Strategy:

- Equality Objective 1: Inclusive and Informed Leadership
- Equality Objective 2: Improving our Workforce Data Collection and improving the representativeness of our workforce
- Equality Objective 3: Reducing Health Inequalities
- Equality Objective 4: Reducing Hate Crime

3.2 Equality Objective1: Our Inclusive and Informed Leadership Objective

3.2.1 We are reviewing attendance of the EPIC Manager Equality and Diversity / Inclusive (EDI) Leadership for this to become a core workshop for anyone joining the Council or moving into a management or leadership position. The review of EDI training and awareness is also a priority as part of our wider Council review using our EDI and Health & Wellbeing self-assessment diagnostic tool.

3.2.2 There is an Equality Essentials/Equality and Diversity Module for all new staff to complete at induction. To date, 2181 staff members have completed this course, an increase of 205 staff from 2,104 as reported in June 2022. For further details please see Appendix (2).

3.2.3 The HR Organisational Development Team are also undertaking the following activities to support the Council's Health and Wellbeing and EDI staff development and support programme.

a) Corporate Calendar of ED&I Awareness Campaigns

Development of an annual calendar of events across the Council with the Equalities Officer, Staff Group representatives, EPIC Pioneers and Public Health colleagues. The aim is to allow visibility across the Council of campaigns we are communicating or engaging with such as: Black History Month in October; International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 2 December 2022 and World AIDS Day on 1 December 2022.

b) Data Working Group

The purpose of this cross council working group to understand what data the Council holds, within the Council and with wider Trafford residents. The Group will identify gaps and explore how best to interpret the data to support appropriate interventions that align to our Corporate Priorities and Equalities Strategy.

c) Financial Wellbeing

In supporting people out of poverty, the Organisational Development team have continued to update the Financial Wellbeing intranet pages, including working

with colleagues to develop a new Cost of Living page on the Trafford Directory detailing national government initiatives and local community and charity initiatives. The Team have worked with the Money and Pensions Service and our Welfare Rights service to deliver two lunch and learn sessions with a focus on financial wellbeing. They have supported the delivery of two Leaders 'Let's Talk' sessions in October also with a focus on financial wellbeing. These sessions covered how leaders can have open conversations about financial concerns, the sharing of top money-saving tips etc.

d) Deaf Awareness Course

Working with our Equalities Officer the Organisational Development Team are looking to provide a half day Deaf Awareness Course. This is for colleagues from front line services and those who have identified a need through the EPIC Check-in process. Delivery of the course is planned for January 2023 and will be reviewed to see whether there is a need to develop future sessions.

e) Menopause Support

The Team is currently drafting a briefing proposal for menopause support ready for launch in 2023. This will be a co-produced through lived experience from our colleagues and will outline desired outcomes to help support colleague wellbeing.

f) Me-learning

We've refreshed our Transgender Awareness eLearning course in partnership with our LGBTQ staff group and transgender colleagues, this was launched for Transgender Remembrance Day on the 20 November.

g) Domestic Abuse

With the launch of our refreshed Domestic Abuse Policy, Domestic Abuse Awareness training is currently being rolled out to managers by Trafford Domestic Abuse Service to help support colleagues who experience abuse.

3.3 Equality Objective 2: Improving our Workforce Data Collection and improving the representativeness of our workforce

3.3.1 Like all local authorities we still have gaps in the protected characteristic data that we hold in our HR and Payroll system ITrent and we continue to strive to improve the amount of data that colleagues choose to share. To ensure that the categories and terminology used reflect the different ways that colleagues might define themselves these days (given that accepted language changes over time), we decided to review this. This was undertaken with input from our staff networks, EPIC Pioneers and union colleagues. We are currently working with our systems team to make the changes within ITrent, which also involves input from the system provider Midland HR, due to the nature of some of the changes. Once all changes have been affected we will be communicating directly with any staff affected, to make them aware and so they have the opportunity to go into the system to review their data and alter as they like.

3.3.2 We plan to launch a campaign in February /March 2023 to raise awareness of the changes that have been made, the information we collect and the reason for doing so. This will be headed up by one of our union colleagues in partnership with our Equalities lead. In April we will publish our annual workforce equality

demographics and we can see whether the sharing of employee data has improved and assess how we compare against our resident population. We should have more up to date resident demographic information from the 2021 Census by this time, which means we should be able to compare more accurately than we have in recent years. Where there are areas of under representation, we can consider how we can move things forwards. The Insights and Intelligence Teams will be carrying out briefings on the 2021 Census findings.

3.4 Equality Objective 3: Reducing Health Inequalities

3.4.1 The Council's Public Health Team's work to encourage physical activity and reduce obesity in Trafford includes the following activities.

Physical activity:

- The inclusive cycling hub in Stretford is up and running, supporting people from North Trafford with beginners' cycling sessions, including the use of adapted cycles. This has supported a wide variety of people, including refugees from Ukraine, a group of Asian men, and people with hearing loss.
- Empower You continue their work to support people with disabilities to increase their participation in physical activity.
- The falls prevention service provided by Age UK Trafford and Trafford Leisure is supporting older people at risk of falling to improve their strength and balance through specialist classes.
- Trafford Council are working in partnership with GreaterSport on a Home Office-funded project in Old Trafford and Stretford to improve safety for women and girls by encouraging and enabling safe active travel around Old Trafford football and cricket stadium.
- The above are supported by the 'Trafford Moving' which is the borough's physical activity and sport strategy, developed to support more people in Trafford to be physically active.

Obesity:

- The Adult Weight Management programmes delivered by Slimming World and Foundation 92 (FitFans) are working closely with colleagues in specific neighbourhoods to ensure that uptake of these free programmes is maximised by people most likely to experience health inequalities.
- Foundation 92's family wellbeing programme continues to deliver positive outcomes around healthy eating, physical activity and mental wellbeing for families living in our most disadvantaged communities.

3.4.2 Public Health are also working with partners to reduce the gap in premature mortality including for people with serious mental illness (SMI) and this includes:

- Commissioning BlueSci the provider of Trafford Primary Care Mental Health & Wellbeing Service and Social Prescribing Service to deliver stop smoking support to people with serious mental illness (SMI). Tobacco-related harm

is the biggest cause of premature mortality within this cohort and people with SMI are 7 times more likely to smoke than the general population.

- BlueSci will recruit a stop smoking practitioner and train their staff in smoking support. This service will receive referrals predominately through the annual SMI Health Checks delivered in primary care. It is also being delivered alongside work delivered by GM Integrated Care, who are working with Greater Manchester Mental Health to deliver stop smoking support to inpatients.

3.4.3 Work currently being undertaken to reduce the gap in relation to smoking, physical activity and obesity includes:

- Integrating our online health offer, provided by LIVA with the physical activity referral scheme (PARS) delivered by Trafford Leisure. This will mean that Trafford residents referred onto the PARS scheme by their GP will also have free access to a trained nutritionist and online health coach, to provide advice and motivation.

3.4.4 Additional stop smoking work is focused on target populations and includes:

- Working with Trading Standards to reduce the prevalence of vapes being sold locally to young people.
- Working with Limelight to explore support options to those in sheltered accommodation who smoke.
- Working with schools to offer stop smoking education sessions in schools.

3.4.5 Public Health are also leading on the following initiatives to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of Trafford residents.

- In the summer, we held some workshops in association with the Centre for Mental Health to understand better how we can tackle mental health inequalities in Trafford. The workshops enabled us to take a system wide approach and map ways to intervene in the system to reduce mental health inequalities. A report is being finalised and the recommended actions are being taken forward by a Mental Health Inequalities Working Group to drive this work forward. This programme of work will feed into the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Our newly developed Trafford Mental Health Needs Assessment, provides a broad picture of mental health across the life course, makes recommendations around steps to improve our understanding of and opportunities to improve mental wellbeing within our communities, particularly around inequalities.
- Utilising both the mental health inequalities report recommendations, and the framework and evidence base from our Needs Assessment, we are aiming to develop in partnership; a Trafford All-Age Mental Health and

Wellbeing Strategy which will set our vision in Trafford in which reducing mental health inequalities will be a key focus.

- An outcome of the Mental Health Care and Accommodation review has been to develop a new framework of providers (Flexible Purchasing System). The specification will contain requirements for providers to support people living with SMIs to improve their health, which included ensuring health checks are completed (NHS, SMI, cancer etc.) in a timely manner. Providers will be contract managed to give assurance that people supported are receiving health checks and will be targeted to improve uptake. In addition, it will be expected that providers will support people to make healthy choices, particularly in diet, exercise and smoking cessation.

3.5 Equality Objective 4: Reducing Hate Crime

- 3.5.1 Trafford's Community Safety Team report that they have received further hate crime reports via the additional crime reporting centres such as libraries since the last Equality Progress Report to Executive in July 2022. For the period between 1st July and 1st December this year these numbered less than 5 hate crimes.
- 3.5.2 The Community Safety Team supported National Hate Crime Awareness week in October with stands and awareness campaigns and will be running activities for the GM event planned in February. The Team also updated the Council's web page on hate crime recently to make it clearer and easier to navigate.
- 3.5.3 The Community Safety Team have funded school workshops on hate crime and are currently liaising with another organisation around a project in schools that aims to tackle racism. The Team has also had an enquiry from the LGBT Foundation regarding funding for some trans awareness training which the Domestic Manager is progressing with the Resourcing Consultant in HR.
- 3.5.4 The Prevent & Channel Co-ordinator post has been vacant since July but following approval from CLT to agree 12 months funding, the Community Safety Team have recruited to this post. The new Co-ordinator starts work with the Council in January.

3.6 Equality Impact Assessments

Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council must show that it has given 'due regard' to equality in its decision making and this can be in relation to the introduction of, or changes to a policy, procedure, or function. Service Managers are currently working on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to accompany the annual Budget Proposal Report to Executive and conducting consultations with stakeholders to inform these. The EIAs help to evidence that we have considered the impact of our staff, clients and customer in the protected characteristic groups when considering the budget proposals, where relevant and proportionate.

4.0 Accessibility Improvements in Trafford Town Hall, Sale Waterside and Town Centres

- 4.1 Following a consultation exercise with the Staff Disability Group in May work is underway to implement the disability aspect of the proposed changes to the meeting rooms at Sale Waterside. The works needed are currently in a contract out to tender and they include: hold open devices to operate on fire alarm to doors; making a toilet area more accessible, improving the location of doors to meeting rooms on corridors. In addition, the initiative to provide sit/stand desk opportunities both Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside continues. These desks allow the user the option to work periodically sat down or comfortably in a standing position.
- 4.2 Work has continued to improve the accessibility of Trafford Town Hall following an elected member enquiry and consultation with the Staff Disability Group Chairs. Work undertaken to fit and reactivate hold open devices along with fitting an automation proximity device on a security door near the canteen in the Town Hall has proved to be satisfactory. Following this, further work has been carried out automating the other doors along the ground and first floor CLT corridors in the remainder of the building. This work included adding automated doors on an accessible toilet on each floor.
- 4.3 With regards to hearing loops at Trafford Town Hall, the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms 2-4 are in scope for the refresh work to be undertaken due to some delays with sourcing key elements of the required hardware. It is expected that all the work will be completed in February 2023. A temporary loop solution was installed in the Chamber to support a meeting last month, which was delivered successfully.
- 4.4 Further consultation took place in November which has aided the completion of the Accessibility Audit of Trafford's four town centres: Altrincham, Sale, Stretford and Urmston. This is part of the Welcome Back Fund, which aims to support town centre recovery following the COVID-19 restrictions. The aim of the audit is to help identify ways to make our town centres more accessible and inclusive, ensuring all residents and visitors have a good experience visiting Trafford.

There will be further engagement with key agencies, Council services and businesses to assist in the delivery of outcomes. In addition, Trafford's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan 2022-2025 will provide an opportunity to fund a number of accessibility improvements identified in the Town Centres Accessibility Audit, such as improvements to public realm and training support for businesses. Currently awaiting formal funding confirmation/grant offer for Trafford's Investment Plan from the GMCA.

- 4.5 On 27th July 2022, the Council's Executive responded to an interim report by the **Scrutiny Committee – Task and Finish Group: Review of Disability Access within Trafford**. The Executive approved the recommendations of the report which included the following:

'Ensure the Planning Service makes the most of the opportunities to improve planning applications for new development - via staff training, early discussion with developers and proactive consideration by Highway Officers to ensure the provision of an accessible environment.' Please see link below for further details.

5. Trafford Community Engagement

5.1 The development of a **Trafford VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector) Strategy** was approved in July 2022 and was co-produced by Trafford Council, Trafford Housing Trust, Thrive Trafford and the Trafford Community Collective. This work enables the voice of different protected characteristic groups such as older people via, for example, Age Concern to be heard. It outlines partnership commitments to strengthening the VCFSE sector in Trafford and will be the focus on the VCFSE Strategic Forum on 19th January 2023.

5.2 Alongside the development of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy, Trafford's VCFSE infrastructure support service contract has been out to tender. A service provider was selected in May 2022 and co-design of the service's specification has been agreed with the new infrastructure support service commencing on 1st October 2022.

5.3. Armed Forces Update

5.3.1 Ex-military personnel are a group that the Council and the Trafford NHS ICB Locality also consider when working to advance equality of opportunity. The Armed Forces Lead is continuing work with the Ministry of Defence and Me-Learning on a training package for the benefit of all ten authorities across Greater Manchester.

5.3.2 In November 2022, the Armed Forces Act 2021 enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant into law to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing public services. This new duty will apply to specified persons or bodies, including councils, when exercising certain Housing, Education or Healthcare functions (excluding social care). Local Authorities and other public bodies now have a duty to give 'due regard' to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant as follows:

- The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces.
- The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.
- The principle that the special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

Specified persons or bodies in scope of the Act (England)

- (a) a local authority in England
- (b) the governing body of a maintained school in England
- (c) the proprietor of an Academy in England
- (d) a non-maintained special school
- (e) the governing body of an institution within the further education sector in England
- (f) a special post-16 institution
- (g) the National Health Service Commissioning Board

- (h) a clinical commissioning group
- (i) a National Health Service Trust in England
- (j) an NHS Foundation Trust.

Further information is available from the Armed Forces Lead.
Contact at Armed.forces@trafford.gov.uk

5.4 Trafford Deaf Advocacy Service

5.4.1 The Council commissions the Trafford Deaf Advocacy Service which provides a weekly half-day drop-in centre on Thursdays to support local d/Deaf residents of Trafford. Trafford Deaf Partnership assists the Commissioning Team with monitoring the progress of the service. As mentioned in the July report a room has been found at Stretford Library for the drop-in sessions run by the Service which have now been moved to Monday and Wednesday mornings. A new Deaf Advocacy Support Worker was appointed on a part-time basis in September 2022. Since commencing her post, the Support Worker has dealt with over a dozen quite complex cases supporting deaf residents. The issues where Deaf residents needed support included: ensuring BSL interpreters are booked for medical appointments for GP surgeries, at hospitals and dentists as well as a neighbour nuisance issue and contacting the Council's electoral registrar team to inform about a change of address.

5.5 Voice of BME Trafford (VBME-T)

5.5.1 In August this year, VBME-T celebrated 15 years of serving the diverse communities of Trafford working to address the inequalities experienced by many BAME people in Trafford whilst at the same time improving their life opportunities. VBME-T have done this with continued support from the Council, Trafford NHS ICB Locality, Trafford Housing Trust, BluSci, Age UK, Trafford College and other partners. VBME-T have also helped with the development of the Trafford Community Collective.

5.5.2 Their celebratory event was attended by the Leader of Trafford Council who received an award on behalf of the Council from VBME-T in recognition of the Council's contribution over the years. In addition, the Principal Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer was also presented with an award on 27th October at Trafford Town Hall where VBME-T's Chair, Co-ordinators and Treasurer met with the Policy, Partnerships and Equalities Team together with the Assistant Director Corporate Strategy and Policy.

5.5.3 Over time VBME-T have delivered several projects which have been funded by the Council's Equality and Partnerships, Public Health and Commissioning Teams. With funding from Trafford Council, VBME-T currently run a **Lifestyle Project** supporting the medical practices in the North of Trafford to increase the uptake of NHS Health screening in Trafford. Through this project, 610 cervical screenings and 104 health checks have been booked.

5.5.4 Both the Council and Trafford Housing Trust are funding VBME-T to provide opportunities for local residents to increase their physical activity through walking groups and chaired based exercises (Healthy Hips and Hearts exercise sessions).

5.5.5 The **Talk about My Generation** project was funded by Trafford Council for local residents (aged 50 and over), to upskill them by receiving the training from Yellow Jigsaw to become community news reporters. Under this project a video report has been created on the Healthy Hips and Hearts exercise sessions by one of the reporters.

5.5.6 More recently, on 20th October, the Elected Member for Health, Wellbeing and Equalities attended a Black History Month event hosted by VBME-T event focussing on the Mental Health of Black African-Caribbean and South Asian men at Limelight. The Elected Member helped to publicly highlight the fact that rates of mental health problems can be much higher for Black African-Caribbean and Asian people than white people. In some communities, mental health problems are not really spoken about and are often viewed with a certain sense of stigma and embarrassment. Consequently, certain groups can feel discouraged, particularly Black African Caribbean and Asian males, from seeking the help they so desperately need. Events such as this create a safe space for anyone from any background to seek help if they are struggling with their mental health.

Please see Appendix (3) for further information about VBME-T, how the organisation was set up and achievements.

6.0 Supporting People out of Poverty

6.1 Our Equality Strategy is aligned to both the refreshed Corporate Plan priority 'Supporting People out of Poverty' and to our Poverty Strategy which aims to tackle the root causes of poverty in our communities and assist those people for whom the poverty and inequalities they were experiencing prior to the pandemic will have deepened since.

6.2 The Trafford Poverty Action group remain responsible for delivery of the current 2021/22 Poverty Strategy published in July 2022. Implementation of the Strategy is being overseen by the Trafford Poverty Action group. The latest Poverty Action Group met on 17th November and identified that services and partners were seeing an increase in demand due to rising living costs.

6.3 Alongside the development of the 2022-25 Trafford Poverty Strategy, the Trafford Poverty Truth Commission was launched on 10th May 2022. 35 Community and Civic Commissioners meet monthly to discuss poverty in Trafford and make recommendations to changes to policies and ways of working which will support people out of poverty. This work will be culminated in a final report in Spring 2023. Trafford Council have representation on the Poverty Truth Commission through two Civic Commissioners: Councillor Liz Patel and Sara Saleh, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources.

6.4 The increase in the Cost of Living is disproportionately impacting on certain groups (especially those on lower incomes). The GM Resident Survey from September 2022 highlights the impact of people worried about the rising cost of living and those very or somewhat worried are typically from the following demographic groups:

- Parents of children in early years/under 5

- Disabled respondents
- Bisexual respondents
- Females
- Those aged 25-34.

Please see Appendix (4) for statistical information reported.

6.5 There is a 'Cost of Living' Group which is coordinating the response and developing actions to respond to the impact on residents. The group is focussed on supporting three areas:

- Physical Focus – utilising our assets
- Volunteering, Coordination and People
- Communications.

This includes looking at: Data on impact on residents, Prioritisation Exercise by sub-groups, Cost of Living Press Release/ Newsletter/Staff and specific items on; Living Rooms proposal, Energy Efficiency in Households, Access to Food, utilities offer for families and best practice responses.

6.7 Winter Wellbeing

3,000 Winter Wellbeing packs are being sent to Trafford's most vulnerable residents, including thousands of older people, to help them get through the winter and cost-of-living crisis. Volunteers have been packing and delivering packs to households. The packs contain a thermos mug, hot water bottle, gloves, hat and blanket, a wordsearch, pen, magnifying glass and leaflets containing advice on where best to access help. Around 1,000 packs will be delivered to residents and 2,000 will go out via Trafford Community Hubs and charity partners including the British Red Cross.

6.8 Money Advice Referral Tool

The Money Advice Referral Tool (MART) has been developed to boost household income and financial resilience by getting more money into people's pockets and helping them access the support they are entitled to.

The Money Advice Referral Tool provides links and information about the range of money advice and related support services available, together with details of how to contact the most appropriate organisation. The tool was created via the Trafford Poverty Action Group and has been developed in partnership with the Greater Manchester Poverty Action Group.

7.0 Safer Streets

7.1 The Right To Streets Project (funded by the Home Office Safer Streets fund) was officially launched on 4th October. The project is led by GreaterSport, with Trafford Council, local organisations, and other partners, and has a core focus on how concerns of safety affect women's engagement and participation in physical activity, active travel, and other local events in their community. Since then, GreaterSport have worked with Trafford Council to build connections in the area and select partners for different parts of the project.

- 7.2 Open Data Manchester will be holding workshops on 10th and 13th December at Gorsehill Studios. These workshops aim to understand experiences and perceptions of safety through mapping and/or walking common routes taken by women & girls in Trafford. The Project also now has a website page on the GM Moving website that provides an overview of the project and key dates to look out for.
- 7.3 As part of the Project, in the New Year, Freedom Personal Safety will be delivering bystander intervention and allyship training. This training is all about empowering people to know what to do when witnessing gender-based violence or street harassment, giving them the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and recognise that everyone has a role to play in reducing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The Project will continue to be delivered over the next nine months with partners and Trafford Council.

8.0 Recommendations

- 81 It is recommended that the Executive:
- (i) Note the contents of the report; and
 - (ii) Approves the proposal that a further progress report containing updates on the success measures within the Corporate Equality Strategy is presented in January 2023.

Key Decision: No

Finance Officer Clearance GB
Legal Officer Clearance DS

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE: Sara Saleh

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.



Appendix (1)

GM Disabled People's Panel Meeting on 20/9/22

Big Disability Survey Findings

The following findings are from 1,495 respondents / disabled people living in GM.

1. FINANCE

- 13% of respondents are finding it impossible to deal with benefits and the system
- 20% cannot afford essential items
- 28% can only afford essential items
- One quarter have had to use food banks

- 68% changing the food they buy to try to afford food
- One third can't pay all their bills
- 39% in debt
- 75% spending more on gas and electricity
- 25% not using digital services 'cos of lack of money e.g., can't afford to replace a damaged tablet

2. SOCIAL CARE

- 29% could not afford to access the right care support for their needs
- 29% agreed that social care is worse than it was 2 years ago
- 11% were refused social care

3. HOUSING

- 43% in housing that partially meets their needs
- 14% in housing that does not meet their needs
- 64% worried about their housing situation
- 58% worried they may not be able to stay in their homes 'cos the right support is not available

4. TRAVEL

- One quarter of respondents felt they could not travel where they want to due to accessibility issues, needing a carer with them, Covid and lack of joined up journeys

5. PROBLEM SOLVING

- 82% of respondents felt they were stuck with problems e.g., difficulties in completing benefit forms
- 63% rely on family for help and support and have fears about accessibility

6. WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH

- 66% have worries relating to poverty
- 26% worried about hate crime
- 20% have experienced hate crime
- 39% are worried about Covid
- 45% stopped from getting support due to long waiting times, difficulty navigating the system, negative and prejudiced attitudes towards disabled people
- Comment – need more co-production in Manchester
- Result of not being able to access digital services 'cos lots of mental health support is online.

7. HEALTHCARE

- Two-thirds of respondents feel their physical health care needs are not being met
- 43% could not afford what they need to stay well
- Many health services are inaccessible e.g., GP surgeries, dentists etc.
- 58% say Government is harming disabled people e.g., due to things like delays in getting BSL Interpreters for appointments etc.

8. EDUCATION

- 42% respondents felt unwelcome in mainstream education
- 28% felt this was also impacted/made difficult by the increases in the cost of living in travel and accommodation
- Universities are incredibly ableist

9. EMPLOYMENT

- 50% of respondents not employed
- 80% not getting same career opportunities as people who are not disabled
- 48% their pay doesn't cover all their expenses
- 27% left jobs due to barriers for disabled people in the workplaces
- 57% feel unsafe due to Covid

➤ Will take survey findings to the Tackling Inequalities Board in November

5 Immediate Recommendations

1. Engage with utility suppliers to protect those at highest risk of disconnection to services and freeze rents
2. Co-ordinate advice and advocacy
3. Free social care and abolish all social care charges
4. Resource Disabled People's Panel and Officers for further training
5. All GM Equality Panel members to be more involved in decision-making forums.

5 Structural Recommendations

1. A Rights Based Approach, adopt the UNCRPD and the Socio-Economic duty of the Equality Act.
2. Establish a framework to measure progress towards achieving our rights going beyond Equality Impact Assessments. GMCA and LAs to improve data collection on disability.
3. Undertake a Cumulative Impact Assessment to see how the multi layered interlocking policies affect disabled people.
4. Take measures to have more disabled people in elected office and leadership roles.
5. Ensure the GM Disabled People's Panel is heard at the highest level and co-produce decisions and policy.

Appendix (2)

HR Training Update for Equality Strategy Progress Report to Executive

Item No. in Strategy	Success Measures
3.1	<p>Equality Objective 1: Inclusive & Informed Leadership - Equality is Everybody's Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of training on mandatory Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) course 'Equality as a Leader' • Uptake of training on mandatory EDI course, 'Equality is Everybody's Business for all staff'

Trafford Council's '**Equality is Everybody's Business for all staff**'.

The Table below is comprised of staff who have completed either the Equality Essentials course or Equality & Diversity as part of their induction.

	Adults Social Care	Children and Families	Finance and Systems	Governance and Community Strategy	Place	Strategy & Resources	Grand Total
<i>Completed</i>	351	312	120	45	124	186	1138
<i>In process</i>	16	5	4		4	3	32
<i>Not Started</i>	172	316	121	60	77	188	934
Completion Rate	65%	49%	49%	43%	60%	49%	54%
Grand Total	539	633	245	105	205	377	2104

Appendix (3)

Voice of BME Trafford – History and Achievements.

1. Since 2007, Voice of BME Trafford (VBME-T) has been an established voluntary community organisation in Trafford, becoming a Communities of Interest organisation in 2015. The Principal Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer as the Council's representative, co-founded VBME-T with Khan Moghal, the Chair, starting work together as early as 2006, with an official launch on 16th February 2007.
- 3 Residents from the diverse communities of Trafford came together to agree VBME-T's aim which is: 'to give a voice to the BAME communities in Trafford and improve their participation and representation at decision-making levels in order to address the inequalities experienced by many BAME people whilst at the same time improving their life opportunities'. VBME-T have staff, volunteers and service users from the African-Caribbean, South Asian, Chinese and East European communities across Trafford.
- 4 In the early years the Council provided office space in the former Old Trafford Library for VBME-T to operate from and a small start-up fund for a few years to assist with running costs as it was some time before VBME-T raised enough finance to employ staff. For the last few years, VBME-T's office base has been at Oakland House on Talbot Road.
- 5 Over time VBME-T have delivered several projects which have been funded by the Council's Equality and Partnerships, Public Health and Commissioning Teams. One of their innovative joint projects was with the former Trafford CCG with support from Public Health called 'Saving Lives'. VBME-T worked with some of the local medical practices in North Trafford to promote the take-up of cervical screening amongst Black African-Caribbean and South Asian women. This was done via 1-1 conversations over the phone with patients from the surgery and bookings made for them to have screening.
- 6 In December 2019, VBME-T successfully bid for £250,000 from the **Lottery Community Fund** to deliver their '21st Agenda - Health and Wellbeing Programme' over 3 years. The programme focused on promoting prevention and early intervention to help reduce the levels of poor health among BAME communities in North Trafford where poverty, poor health and ethnicity often coincide.
- 7 During the roll-out of the **Covid.19 vaccination programme** VBME-T worked with the Council's Public Health Team to encourage take-up of the vaccine amongst Black and South Asian communities in North Trafford. The Director of Public Health trained 4 members of VBME-T's staff to ensure they were equipped with the correct knowledge when engaging in conversations with residents about the vaccine. VBME-T also held a webinar supported by the Consultant of Public Health and a Trafford GP for the local communities.
- 8 VBME-T also worked with health practitioners using the model of 1-1. conversations over the phone with patients to promote take-up of the Covid.19 vaccine and answer any questions patients may have. This work was rolled out at North Trafford Group Practice, Brooks Bar Medical Practice and Limelight Medical Practice. The outcomes from this work are as follows.

- a) In total 79 people took up the Covid.19 vaccine with medical practice intervention by VBME-T.
 - b) 35 people attended the webinar and 28 people have watched the recording of the webinar up until August 2022.
 - c) Messages from Public Health have been cascaded into the communities through VBME-T's social media and WhatsApp group.
8. The **Long Covid Peer Support Group** started up in September 2022 in Trafford funded by Greater Manchester Integrated Care. This culturally appropriate support group provided people with a safe space to share their experiences of living with long COVID. The work primarily targets the Pakistani South Asians communities. To date 28 people have engaged with this project.
 9. On December 14th as VBME-T approach the end of their 21st Agenda' Lottery funded work they held a community seminar to share their experiences and outcomes from the past 3 years.

Voice of BME Trafford Black History Event – 20th October 2022



Representatives of the Council, VBME-T and the African and Caribbean Mental Health Services at the Black History Month event on 20th October 2022.

For further information on the work of VBME-T, please see [Homepage - Voice of BME-T \(voicebmet.co.uk\)](http://voicebmet.co.uk)

Appendix (4)

People in Protected Characteristic Groups Worried about Rising Living Costs

Over 4 in 5 (81%) are **worried about the rising costs of living**, with around 2 in 5 (39%) very worried - the latter being significantly higher than elsewhere in the country

