



# Equality Objectives: Progress Report 2019-2021

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East Staffordshire Borough Council's commitment to equality is stated in our Single Equality Scheme, which was reviewed in 2018. The Scheme and the equality objectives contained within it are based on the Council's legal obligations arising from the Equality Act 2010. The Act sets out the general equality duty, which requires that public sector authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (only with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act also requires the Council to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty, and prepare and publish at least one equality objective, at least every 4 years, which the Council thinks it needs to achieve in order to meet one or more of the general equality duties.

East Staffordshire Borough Council identified and emphasised four equality objectives in the Single Equality Scheme 2018. The four objectives are:

- **Everyone can access our services, facilities and information**
- **Decision making and services are influenced by the needs of residents and communities**
- **Discrimination, harassment and hate crime is not tolerated**
- **Our workforce, and workforce policies, support equality**

East Staffordshire Borough Council has a structure of responsibility for equality, from department to Cabinet level. The Leader of the Council has the equality portfolio, as does one Head of Service and one of the Corporate Officers has an equality monitoring responsibility. Equality is also a standing item on the agenda of the monthly Corporate Management Team meetings.

This report details the progress that East Staffordshire Borough Council has made in meeting our equality objectives.

## Objective 1: Everyone can access our services, facilities and information

To support the “advancing [of] equality of opportunity between people, who share a protected characteristic and those who do not”, our aim is for all our services, facilities and information to be accessible to all, and for people to be satisfied with our approach to providing those. We aim for the different needs of people to be considered in all aspects of the planning and delivery of our services, facilities and information, and for reasonable adjustments to be made for people with disabilities. We will collect and analyse data from residents to develop our understanding of communities and service users.

### Equality Information

The Council collects, analyses and, where appropriate, publishes equality information from our service users to monitor the take up of services. Information is published periodically on our website, currently from users of the Brewhouse Arts Centre and the Housing Options services (the Council is closely working with Everyone Active to ensure this practice is continued for Meadowside Leisure Centre, Shobnall Leisure Complex, the Sports Development team and Uttoxeter Leisure Centre). Equality information is also collected and published from job applicants and our workforce. Information on customer/resident satisfaction is collected by the Leisure Centres, the Brewhouse Arts Centre, the Town Hall, Market Hall, the Communities and Open Spaces teams.

### Equality and Health Impact Assessments

Up to date policies support the organisational needs, equality objectives and legal obligations. In relation to this, equality and health impact assessments (EHIA) are completed for new and reviewed policies, functions or services, and provide an assessment of the equalities and health impact of a policy or function on different groups. The Council’s corporate report template requires the creation and inclusion of an EHIA, where the report meets the EHIA criteria. The EHIA template includes questions, which require detailed evidence formed by equality information and consultation; this may include information from the service users, communities and the workforce. Completed equality and health impact assessments are published on our website alongside the relevant report in the Council and Democracy section of the website. The completion of equality and health impact assessments identified in Service Plans has been monitored quarterly as part of the Corporate Performance Report.

For the period 2018-2021 EHIA were completed on the following policies and proposals:

Capabilities and Disciplinary Procedure	Learning and Development Policy
Covid-19 Vaccination Policy	Equality in Employment Policy Statement
Managing Stress and Promoting Wellbeing Policy	Dignity at Work
Fixed-Term and Temporary Contracts Dismissal Procedure	Management of Sickness Absence Policy
DBS Procedure and Policy	Misuse of Drugs & Alcohol Policy
No Smoking Policy	Redundancy Policy
Long Service Awards	Workplace Health Strategy
Attendance Recognition Scheme	Winter Night Shelter

Homelessness Strategy Renewal  
Housing Strategy  
Review of Public Conveniences  
Allocations Policy  
Pay Range Review  
LGS Pension Review  
Washlands Strategy

Council Tax Scheme  
National Non-Domestic Rate Policy  
Appeals Procedure  
Council Tax Reduction Scheme  
Parking Services Review

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related lockdowns, a number of HR employment policies underwent emergency review near the start in order to ensure that the Council's workforce is adequately supported with flexibility, care and consideration for each person's individual circumstances.

### **Procurement**

The Procurement Strategy states the Council's commitment to ethical procurement, including a commitment to eliminating both direct and indirect discrimination. The policy states: "*within the resources available to it, the Council will provide appropriate, sensitive and accessible services. It will not discriminate on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics of equality.*" Where appropriate and proportional, equality questions are included in the procurement processes.

### **Accessible Communications**

The corporate website in the main meets W3C standards and AA accessibility, and the Council uses monitoring software to identify any issues with accessibility. The Council uses quality assurance software to monitor the functionality and accessibility of the core corporate website. The software assess its compliance to the Web Content Accessibility Guidance 2.1 standard and the pages assessed currently score 89, which is rated as 'Great'. The Council's website has an accessibility bar, which allows visitors to change colours and fonts, listen to the text, use a ruler, and translate text as well as other options to assist with the accessibility of the website. In September 2020 the bar was used by 210 unique visitors and had 289 total visits.

A draft Communications, Consultations & Engagement strategy, scheduled to be approved in December 2021, includes an action to launch a website content refresh programme. The website content refresh is a programme that will run throughout the lifecycle of the strategy and will provide content editors with the tools to ensure that their content is up-to-date and accessible. In addition, content editors will be encouraged to ensure that their content is more readable and therefore more accessible to users with lower literacy levels.

### **Accessible Premises, Services and Information**

- All East Staffordshire Borough Council's public buildings feature on the website, and detail the accessibility of our premises. The Council has undertaken a review of its accessibility information on the website with regards to all its sites and continues to maintain the relevant content pages up-to-date – for Shobnall Leisure Complex, the Brewhouse, Town Hall and Function Suite, Stapenhill Cemetery, Customer Service Centres – Burton on Trent and Uttoxeter, and the Market.
- The Customer Service Centres (Burton on Trent and Uttoxeter) are based in fully accessible buildings and can provide interpreting and translation services when

required. During the period of coronavirus pandemic, the Customer Service Centres were not operating in their physical space in line with the specific government guidance. The CSC buildings have now re-opened operating by appointment-only systems. Further information on contacting the CSC: <https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/coronavirus/esbc-services>

- The Housing Options service is based in a fully accessible building (Burton Customer Service Centre), but will also visit people who are unable to travel, in hospital or at other locations. The service is contactable by phone, and operates an out-of-hours service to respond to homeless emergencies throughout the year. The service also utilises interpreting and translation services when required. During the pandemic, the Team ensured their services continue to be accessible by ensuring the Housing Outreach Officer is available to meet applicants, where remote communication was not feasible for any reason, in person.
- During elections, all of the Council's polling stations have disabled access. Each Polling Station has to be issued with a Tactile Voting Device, by law. This assists blind voters and allows them to vote independently. If an elector cannot vote independently, the Presiding Officer can mark the ballot paper for the elector and can even take a ballot paper outside of the Polling Station to a car to allow an elector to vote, in a situation where they are unable to get out of the car.

The Elections Team can provide independent support for anyone wishing to vote and this is stated on each Poll Card and Postal Vote application.

The Elections Team send Postal Vote applications to all residents of care homes so they can vote by post, if they wish to do so. The Team can also grant electors a 'Waiver' in terms of their postal vote if they are unable to sign their name clearly or if their signature has become illegible, this is often the case with elderly voters or voters with a disability.

- Changing Places accessible changing rooms are offered at both the Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres. Changing Places changing rooms and toilets have extra features and more space in comparison with a standard disabled toilet. This facility makes the Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres more accessible for people with disabilities. Both the Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres also maintain their Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) Status, a mark of the accessibility of the facilities.
- The Environment Team provide refuse and recycling collection support to people with mobility or other issues that make moving their bins for collection difficult by registering them onto the assisted collection scheme.
  - The *assisted collection scheme* can apply to residents who have difficulties with mobility (with temporary or long-term injury), illness, disability or who are elderly and who do not live with an able-bodied person of 15 years and over. Council staff will collect the bin(s)/bags, empty them and return them to the property. This is a permanent and ongoing service, which is currently provided to 1069 properties and of these requests 148 have said that they are registered disabled. The entitlement to the service is reviewed every 2 years.

- *Larger or additional bins* can also be requested by households that generate excess waste due to medical circumstances, a large family of 5 or more living at the property or a family where there are children in nappies. The Waste Management Team requires information about the date of birth for the children and the ages of anyone else in the property so that it is clear when the additional bin will need to be removed and that the household qualifies for the larger or additional bins. There are currently 2190 properties listed on the larger/additional bin list. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns, which took place, the requests for additional second bin increased.
- In January 2021 the Council launched an online bulky waste request form, which allows residents to request and pay for a bulky waste collection online. Over 1,539 forms have been submitted online since the start of this provision, offering another access channel for residents to use our services.
- Stapenhill Cemetery continues to work with the updated working patterns, including open at weekends so visitors are able to engage with a member of staff outside of normal office hours. Stapenhill Cemetery also provides a 24-hour response to requests for burial by Muslim residents. This ensures that residents are able to adhere to the requirements of their religion.
- Documents (e.g. Local Plans) are published on the Council's website and can be reviewed by the public. Different formats are available on request. Public speaking letters are sent by email and post by the Planning team which gives equal opportunities to people who do not have access to a computer.
- The Councillor Community Fund process is led by Ward Councillors, from application to informing organisations/groups of the outcome, which ensures their engagement with the Ward and its communities. The application form is normally completed by the Ward Councillor, so alternative formats are not generally needed. However, in cases where community groups are tasked with the completing of the form, full support is available from the Social Regeneration Officer (via telephone, email and in person). These methods, coupled with the involvement of the Ward Councillor, have proved successful for ensuring there are no barriers to applying for funding, for example, for those without English as a first language for example and also those with sight impairments. Greater engagement with our voluntary sector partner, Support Staffordshire, has ensured that information about our funding scheme and support available has been publicised more widely and whilst the initial application still has to be made through the Ward Councillor, it has ensured that our funding opportunities are accessible to more groups and organisations.
- The Council continues to use an accessible recruitment system in partnership with WMJobs to ensure safe handling of sensitive personal data within the recruitment system and process. Following the General Data Protection Regulation coming into force in 2018, the Council also published its Privacy Notice on the website to inform residents of the personal information the Authority collects when providing a wide range of services to them.

## Activities and Services that promote equality and inclusion

The Council delivers a variety of projects and services for residents.

### *Customer Service Centre*

- The Revenues, Benefits and Customer Contacts Teams work with service users to identify what their circumstances are and if they have any specific needs, if considered vulnerable people (e.g. mental or physical impairment, substance abuse, victims of domestic violence, recently bereaved individuals, individuals who have difficulty understanding, speaking or reading English, pregnant women). Contact is made using appropriate methods, including telephone or face-to-face meeting, written communication, interpretation services or the involvement of a family member, friend or support worker. Further processes are adapted to support the vulnerable person and to get the situation resolved in the best possible way for all parties.

### *Leisure and Sport*

The Leisure Centres and Active Communities team<sup>1</sup> provide a wide range of accessible and tailored sports activities for different audiences, working to ensure that activity programmes reflect the needs of the community.

- For pre-schoolers activities include *Active Antz, Playday, Preschool swim lessons, and Preschool gymnastics*. For teenagers there are dedicated *Youth Fitness* sessions. For older people the activities include the *Active Adults* programme.
- Adult and ladies only swimming sessions are offered at Meadowside Leisure Centre. There is also an *Inclusive Cycling* facility at Shobnall Leisure Complex.
- The Leisure Centres and Active Communities team run health promotions throughout the year linked to national and international health campaigns including: Know your Number, February Heart Month, Diabetes, Day of the Older Person, National Fitness Day, and Mental Health. Additionally, the whole of the management team are trained in Mental Health First Aid.
- The Leisure Centres and Active Communities team maintain strong partnership working with local schools and disability clubs to promote and deliver opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in various activities. These activities include: *Rebound Therapy, Able Too United, Powerchair Football, Inspire Multi-Sport Club and the Able Too Adult Activity Club*. Meadowside LC hosts the *Able Too* games, which gives people with a disability the opportunity to try various activities and sports – the next one is planned for 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Meadowside Leisure Centre: <https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/meadowside-leisure-centre/>  
Shobnall Leisure Complex: <https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/shobnall-leisure-complex/>  
Uttoxeter Leisure Centre: <https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/uttoxeter-leisure-centre/>

- In 2019 the Active Communities team co-ordinated a totally free aquatic event. Oceans of Fun took place on Sunday 19th May with over 200 children in attendance, across a morning at Uttoxeter Leisure Centre and an afternoon at Meadowside Leisure Centre. Both sites delivered water-based activities, which were hugely popular, encouraging more children to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to participate in water-based sports.



- In July 2019 Shobnall Leisure Complex hosted the first Everyone Active Sporting Champion initiative – an event to inspire and educate primary-aged children about different sports. Working in partnership with 7 local schools and supported on the day by Great Britain para-athlete Jade Hall Jones, the team delivered a fun day of sporting activities for over 200 school children.
- The Community and Education programme recommenced from 12th April 2021. During each school term time, regular lunch time physical activity programmes to several local schools for a duration of 9 hours per week. This work enables the team to build strong relationships with the local education providers and deliver structured activity sessions to improve the children’s health and wellbeing.
- Through the summer of 2021, Everyone Active and the leisure centres took the lead as one of the primary providers for the year’s SPACE programme and offered a range of different activities and venues, providing young people with new experiences and the opportunity to participate in physical activity. Through the partnership, working with family support and educational welfare officers, the teams provided 74 free passes to access the summer activity programme, directly to those families that needed the support the most. Over the course of the summer holidays, the passes were used over 198 times across the facilities and the doorstep activity programme.
- Since the beginning of 2021, Everyone Active have been in discussions with Midland Psychology regarding their ‘Keep Achieving’ project. The project is an energetic pathway programme which is now entering into its third year. It aims to help children with autism and their families become more active together and remain so by taking part in a series of enjoyable activities, which are as autism-friendly and family-friendly as possible. It is pleasing to note that a 12-month programme of activities with Midland Psychology has been agreed – it started on 10th May.
- Since May 2021, a weekly activity session, specifically targeting people with disabilities, including both SEND, and directly for families, was re-introduced at the Meadowside Leisure Centre. The project includes two hours of free access to a dedicated play-world session each week; it is another great addition to the leisure centres’ wider programme of activities for people with disabilities that in Borough, which already includes inclusive cycling, Keep Achieving and

rebound therapy. By providing these activities, there have been 480 people with disabilities accessing the leisure services.

- In June 2021 the Walking for Health scheme was re-launched. This targeted project aims to engage with the older person by providing opportunities to participate in volunteer led walks throughout the Borough. These walks are for all abilities and are proven to offer a range of both mental and physical health benefits. Throughout the month of June, 161 people participated during the various walks in Horninglow, Eton, Stapenhill Hollows, Rolleston, Meadowside, Yoxall and Tutbury.
- Through the summer of 2021, a local campaign was run to celebrate parents and families in all forms and address the challenges of balancing life changes and a pandemic with maintaining a healthy lifestyle – the campaign was launched in August, after the extremely turbulent 18 months. Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres and Shobnall Leisure Complex provide a *community hub* for local people and can play a huge part in offering a space to seek support, socialise with others and get advice on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Through this campaign, Everyone Active wanted to take parents and families on a journey to being more active, to highlight the different activities families can do together whilst maintaining a healthy routine, without it being too time-consuming.

The campaign promoted inclusivity and offered customers exclusive activity plans that they can participated in during August, offered advice and support for parents and their friends/family in leading a healthier lifestyle, and promoted various activities (e.g. swimming lessons, children’s activities etc.) across the centres that families can take part (alone or together) to keep active.

### *Leisure and Culture*

- The Brewhouse Arts Centre<sup>2</sup> delivers a range of activities designed for people with particular needs. This includes a weekly *Carers’ Café*, run by Rotary Club of Burton, which supports those living with dementia and their carers; providing a social and safe space to meet others in a similar situation. Over 30 people attend each week. The group agree a meeting agenda and fundraise to bring in guest speakers. There is access to the piano in the café bar for sing-along sessions as well as the cinema for lectures.
- On Friday afternoon the Brewhouse runs the *Cinema Club* – an initiative aimed at those living in isolation or those with additional needs. It shows musicals and other entertaining films in a relaxed, social and informal screening environment. The participants choose the films they watch and support each other to attend.
- Weekly *ReBalance* sessions which are accessed by older people over the age of 65 or those with mobility issues. These seated dance sessions build strength, balance and coordination, and are particularly helpful in falls management, as

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<sup>2</sup> Brewhouse Arts Centre: <http://www.brewhouse.co.uk/>

well as helping to make sure that those with mobility issues are not isolated. For the period May 2019-February 2020, the sessions saw 576 participants joining. Furthermore, the attendees have their own 'committee' and fundraise for additional activities.

- Some feedback shared: *"After breaking my leg, I have found the class has helped my mobility greatly. Also getting out and meeting new friends has been great as I live alone."*; *"Brilliant class. I always end feeling more flexible with more stamina and more positive."*; *"Keeps my joints moving and a good reason to get out of the house, lovely people to socialise with. I really enjoy it."*

\*During the COVID-19 pandemic, a *ReBalance DVD* was produced for people with mobility issues, containing physical exercises conducted by our professional tutors that they could follow at home – over 50 older people received the DVD. This helped senior residents by increasing wellbeing and activity whilst isolated at home.

- The *New Generation* event at The Brewhouse was first seen in October 2016 – it is delivered in partnership with Burton and Derby University Hospitals and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, every October as part of the UK Older People's Day coinciding with the UN International Day of Older Persons. In 2019 the event attracted 120 people aged over 65. The day was a celebration of the achievements and contributions that older people make to society and the economy. Older People's Day supports the campaign to challenge negative attitudes and outdated stereotypes.
- Weekly *UpBeat* sessions for pre-school children and their carers present an opportunity for music and movement. They see around 20-25 babies (plus their grown-ups) developing coordination and stimulating learning. The opportunity is beneficial to both the babies and the parents – an isolation is a real risk for new parents, so the group offers space for socialising.
  - Some feedback shared: *"One participant values the group so much that she walks from Tutbury so that her 1-year-old triplets can take part in the sessions and she has an opportunity to get out of the house and engage with other parents."* (walking as she is unable to take the triplets' pushchair on the bus)
- The Brewhouse Arts Centre also delivers an *Art Café* and *iDance* aimed at adults with additional needs and their carers (free admissions). Participants can learn new skills in art and dance and make new friends in a social environment. The sessions have been running since September 2016 and are well attended. So far the Arts Café has attracted 300 adults with additional needs and *iDance* – 351 individuals (numbers increase). The dancers also took part in last year's dance platform to great acclaim and as numbers have grown, we have added an end-of-season "club night" session. This has become very popular with the last two events seeing over 40 adults with learning difficulties involved.
  - Some feedback shared: *"As a carer iDance is great for the young people I bring. It helps to build confidence and self-esteem. I have seen shy students gain in confidence to the point they can perform in front of audiences. Plus it is brilliant fun for everyone."*

*“As a wheelchair user it can be hard to join in a lot of groups. With iDance Catherine always makes sure I can Join in as much as everyone else. I love dancing and this gives me the opportunity to do this. It is great fun and I always have a good time.”*

\*During the COVID-19 pandemic, the *iDance* sessions were provided online on a weekly basis for young people and people with learning difficulties and additional needs.

- Working in partnership with Baby People, UK-only Hip-Hop School, the Brewhouse Arts Centre offered free music-making sessions for young people aged between 8 and 18 years, through funding from Youth Music in a project called *Microbeats*. Between June 2019-February 2020 the project engaged with over 300 young people across 13 sessions in 2 schools; Paget and DeFerrers and 1 youth group; Winhill Youth Club; plus 94 young people attending sessions at The Brewhouse, learning new skills in singing, song-writing and music production.
  - Some feedback received states: *“I just wanted to send an email to express how fabulous the last two days of workshops have been. The relationships and rapport with the students was instant and the standard of rap and music created was very high, in particular with the GCSE group. The way in which things were explained and the way each aspect of rap and music production was looked into was just at the right level for the students and the feedback from them has been amazing! Such a great way to end the term!”*
- Additionally, the Brewhouse Arts Centre’s Young Creatives weekly sessions also offer young people aged 7 and above the opportunity to engage in music, art and cinema, get supported by art tutors and learn new creative skills. For those interested, Arts Award qualifications are available to participants of all ages and at all levels.
- The Brewhouse also offers a dance programme aimed at supporting young people with additional needs through its inclusive club night. It is a fun and social evening, which has become very popular – the last two events pre-pandemic saw over 40 adults with learning difficulties plus their carers in attendance.
- The Brewhouse team assist with the Burton Children’s Festival – a free festival of outdoor theatre, activities and events. The festival brings international artists to Burton and families can access performance events for free in Burton Town Centre. This nurtures feelings of pride of where they live and see arts and culture in their home town.
- Pre-pandemic, Burton Town Hall Tea Dance for older people (offering free admission for carers) took place monthly. It offered social, fun and fitness for those interested in traditional ballroom. Accompanied by the Mighty Wurlitzer organ.

During the coronavirus pandemic

- The Brewhouse Team moved their activities online or adapted and created new ways of supporting residents. The Living Rooms project engaged older people with artists to collect oral histories, memories, stories of Burton via weekly telephone conversations. The stories and the voices of the older people of Burton were features in a film that was created<sup>3</sup>. The project reduced feelings of isolation and increased contact for older people at home. 15 participants plus artist commission to Badapple theatre.
- From October 2020 to February 2021, 4 online holiday activity programmes were delivered for children and families – Children’s Create-at-Home Packs & Activity Days. Over 100 families received free ‘make-at-home’ activity pack and registered for the online activities.
- Once Upon a Wednesday represented weekly online storytelling sessions aimed at increasing wellbeing and reducing the sense of isolation for those at home during the Covid-19 lockdowns. In the period from 1st July 2020 to 9th June 2021 1038 people took part as storytellers or listeners. On average over 50 weeks, 550 stories, songs and poems were shared / performed. Participants logged on from USA, Scotland, France, Spain, Ireland and all over England (including many of our Burton on Trent locals).  
Some shared: *“I really look forward to my Wednesday evenings with you and so many other lovely folk. I live alone and don’t like the evenings but live talented entertainment every Wednesday is brilliant. Thank you so much for organising our evenings”*; *“You have created something very special with these sessions”*.
- The Brewhouse Arts Centre Team delivered 12-week-long online course for adults feeling isolated and looking for an increased sense of wellbeing / learning a new skill / gaining a sense of community. The sessions were focused on movement and drawing. Over the 12 weeks, 240 participants took part in the *Wellness Workshops*.
- *Beyond Borders* is a partnership project with West Midlands Dance Network (led by DanceXChange and Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022). It created an Inclusive Young People’s Dance Group from East Staffordshire, which was featured as part of the Birmingham International Dance Festival in June 2021. 15 young people took part in 6 week programme

### *Communities and Open Spaces*

- In the Open Spaces team the *Fountains Project*, running in partnership with Fountains High School, continues to run at the Horticulture Centre<sup>4</sup>. The project at the Potting Shed is used to offer vocational training and an alternative to classroom-based learning. It provides pupils with the opportunity to learn basic gardening, retail, stock control and logistics skills, build confidence and self-esteem and develop their social skills in a safe setting. The Council’s

<sup>3</sup> [Trent Stepping Tonight - Live & Local: LivingRoom - YouTube](#)

<sup>4</sup> Greenhouse Garden Centre:  
<http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/greenhouse-centre>

horticultural staff offer training workshops and help the students achieve non-accredited foundation horticultural certificates, which helps them move on to further education or further vocational projects. The partnership is very positive for both the school and the Council, as the students offer a public retail service whilst gaining skills and qualifications.

The project has moved emphasis towards more Environmentally Friendly products, which will enhance the environment and biodiversity (e.g. trees, next boxes, bird feeders and shrubs and plants, which are of value to birds, bees and other wildlife). Products will also include things that enhance human health such as vegetable and herb plug plants. Overall, the emphasis is on a more environmental education approach, which will be of increased value to students learning and will support ESBC's policy for environmental enhancement and reduction of carbon footprint.

Post-pandemic, the project has re-commenced at the Potting Shed and the retail operation is in place.

- The *GO Garden Project*<sup>5</sup> at Uttoxeter Leisure Centre has entered its second year. Volunteers, including people with health problems and disabilities, undertake gardening activities, which not only provide mental stimulation and enhanced wellbeing, but the plants are used in community floral displays. The project is to develop a new Tree Nursery area to produce trees for open spaces around the Borough. It highlights the health benefits of therapeutic gardening as an alternative to sports-based activities, and it also adds a social element. Volunteer groups are looking to recruit more members, especially important in times of social isolation and the challenges of the pandemic. The project was closed during the covid-19 lockdowns due to the leisure centre closure.

Post-pandemic, the project has re-opened and volunteers continue to cultivate plants for Uttoxeter in Bloom. Increased production of flowering plants and trees will increase local production, reducing the Council's carbon footprint and enhancing the local environment.

- As a result of the consequences of covid-19 pandemic, starting in autumn 2020, emphasis has been placed on offering more volunteering opportunities, especially to vulnerable people, who are suffering from mental health issues. Therapeutic gardening sessions introduced into the *Community Wellbeing Garden* (previously known as Community nursery area) as well as via In Bloom and other associated volunteer groups, which supports local groups in their efforts to improve local neighbourhoods and their entries in the In Bloom Award. More short courses and workshops offered to increase residents' health and encourage them to grow their own healthy vegetables
- Like the Uttoxeter GO Garden Project, Burton Horticulture Centre provides individuals with the opportunity to undertake gardening in a relaxed environment. The activities contribute to improved physical and mental health of the individuals. Furthermore, opportunities exist for work placements to

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<sup>5</sup> Go Garden Project: <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/go-garden>

develop vocational skills. In partnership with Mind, the Horticulture Centre is utilised to improve mental health amongst participants – social prescribing. Additionally, “Friends of” groups and other volunteer groups, support wellbeing as well as improve local spaces.

- Councillors’ Community Fund provides communities with access to a small pot of funding for locally important projects. The team’s Parks Development Plans aim to improve parks so that they are mentally and visually stimulating to visitors and users, by increasing tree coverage. Additionally, the Council’s Tourism Strategy focuses on raising awareness and promoting the wide range of visitor attractions/experiences that are available in East Staffordshire and the surrounding area.

## **Objective 2: Decision making and services are influenced by the needs of residents and communities**

Our aim is for all communities to engage in public and civic life, and for their opinions to influence the decision making, planning and the delivery of services. We aim for the information from and about communities to include details concerning all protected characteristics, communities of interest and communities of place.

Our consultation approach is that our commitment to meaningful engagement with residents will inform or influence decision making with the aim of improving standards, efficiency and quality of life for residents and other stakeholders in the borough. Consultation will be conducted in a manner that allows all interest groups to participate; feedback on the results of consultation is also provided to those involved.

### *Neighbourhood Support*

During the period 2018-2021 ESBC continued to offer support to a number of consultation and engagement activities as part of ongoing work to support residents and community groups, including the Heath Big Local partnership in Uttoxeter and any other ad hoc projects that arise. Involvement with partner agencies on their engagement activities including the local housing association has also increased. Supporting community groups with developing their consultation activities to evidence need for a range of community projects and activities.

Ongoing, operational support for the Friends of Bramshall Park group has now switched to the Open Spaces team, but the Social Regeneration Officer continues to advise on procedures for setting up similar groups and advising on partnership working between community groups and the Council on other land/building projects to improve engagement and enable future working to benefit communities.

The Neighbourhood Fund programme continued until 31st March 2020 with the aim of funding projects that could demonstrate a community need that had been identified through some form of consultation. As part of the funding process representatives from community projects were invited to present their funding pitch to the grant panel, this encouraged further involvement and engagement between our funding panel and the

communities. In the period 2018-2020 18 projects (approximately 40 reps from community groups) attended the panel meetings to present.

In response to the Covid pandemic adaptations were made to the Councillor Community Funding scheme<sup>6</sup> to ensure that it better met the need of groups and organisations responding to address the needs in communities in East Staffordshire. Within the financial remit of the scheme the criteria and process was tweaked to ensure the funding criteria and funding process was able to best respond to the needs of our local communities, particularly in response to growing issues of food poverty, holiday hunger and isolation. A quick turnaround with funding decisions and the change in focus ensured that the scheme was accessible to a wide range of organisations, many of whom had not received funding from ESBC before and covering rural and urban areas supporting a range of demographic groups including homeless, vulnerable children and families and those economically disadvantaged.

During 2020-21, 37 applications were approved and received grant funding through the Councillor Community Fund scheme. Many of the projects were related to food poverty, holiday hunger and family support activities primarily in some of the more deprived wards of East Staffs (Winshill, Horninglow & Eton, Burton, Heath, Anglesey) so beneficiaries including families, children and adults most in need, e.g. Heath Community Centre, Broadway Social Enterprise, LoveInspire Foundation, Burton HOPE, Winshill Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Other projects tackled isolation and loneliness, particularly for the older generation, e.g. Burton Caribbean Association and Barton Volunteer Network.

With the end of lockdowns, some more traditional projects were initiated, with various groups benefitting with their activities for children and young people, rural communities and urban communities. Projects involving improvements to outdoor spaces and community buildings tend to have a wider community benefit, for example, the work at Horninglow Learning Centre will enable the building to be used to support skills development for young people and the unemployed.

### *Consultations*

In 2020 the Council began an engagement process with our 35 parish councils on options for *reinstating the Parish Council Forum* to provide improved channels of communication and engagement between ESBC and the Parish Councils and local residents, to share best practice and speak with selected stakeholders in East Staffordshire. Work will continue on this through 2021 and will see the first (virtual) meeting of the newly established Parish Council Forum (on a quarterly basis).

Beyond March 2021, the Council consulted with residents with regards to the services they provide in relation to *waste and recycling collection*. Insights from the survey will be used alongside other information to make recommendations for changes or enhancements to the bin collection services.

ESBC is also consulting with residents in both paper and online format survey and the feedback received will be used to inform the *future spending plans* and ensure that the

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<sup>6</sup> Councillor Community Fund:  
<http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-working/councillor-community-fund>

Council continues to provide services that are both value for money to residents and consistent with their needs, desires and willingness to pay for the services received.

During 2021, the Council undertook public consultation for *regeneration projects* in both Uttoxeter and Burton upon Trent. In Uttoxeter, members of the public were invited to provide feedback and ideas relating to how priority regeneration sites identified by the Uttoxeter Masterplan could be taken forward for improvement. The consultation lasted 7 weeks in total and involved workshops with stakeholders and members of the public, as well as drop in events both during the week and at weekends. Residents also received leaflets informing them about the consultation process and responses could be made in person, online or by freepost. The outcome of this consultation will now inform how the Masterplan for Uttoxeter is taken forward to implementation.

In Burton, the Council has utilised a three-phased, 13-week consultation process for its project under the Burton Towns Fund programme. This involved an initial 5 week call for ideas, where residents could offer thoughts and suggestions as to the types of uses they would like to see in the town centre. A second detailed consultation lasting four weeks with public drop in events both in person and online, where residents could provide feedback on suggested uses and their locations, which were proposed using the findings of the call for ideas. This was built using the 'commonplace' consultation web platform, which encourages more transparent consultation whereby respondents can view the responses submitted by others. The final consultation, lasting four weeks, involves the proposal of a final indicative plan for the area for which residents will be able to say whether they do or do not support the proposals and make other comments. This process will then inform the development of the project in terms of the proposed uses, their locations and how the project should be taken forward.

### *Community and Open Spaces*

The Open Spaces team supports the delivery of the "In Bloom Federation", which brings together volunteer groups and parish councils to share best practice and learning around *In Bloom*<sup>7</sup> entries. These In Bloom entries then help to enhance the local visual appearance of wards across the borough and results in various In Bloom awards.

The Burton Civic Society have been involved in a recent restoration project of the Burton Swan and the Abbots Garden. Their input has been crucial in understanding the wider community perspective.

The Open Spaces team continues its joint collaborative venture with Horninglow Parish Council to improve play provision in the area. Both organisations work together to consult local people about play provision needs and requirements. This collaboration is hoped to improve the equipment that is available for future generations.

Cemetery Officers consult with the Muslim community in order to enhance local burial processes whilst being respectful to both the religious elements and the requirements placed on the Authority.

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<sup>7</sup> In Bloom: <https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/in-bloom>

The Stapenhill Cemetery visitors are asked to complete a feedback form on the cemetery, its condition and the services provided. Feedback is reviewed and amendments are made in response to it.

### *Planning Services*

In addition, the planning pre-application service exempts fees relating to alterations and extensions to a disabled person. Planning Officers also respond proactively to any requests to visit a property and are allowed to take into account (to a point) personal circumstances in decision making. This ensures that common sense prevails when considering our customers and helping those who may be disadvantaged.

Over the course of the year, the Planning Team received complaints regarding a relatively new play area, which provided limited equipment with children with disabilities. The Team made contact with the developer as well as the Open Spaces Team to see how the equipment could be altered or increased in terms of vicinity to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

### *Leisure and Sport*

Regular consultation is also undertaken by the Active Communities Team, who meet twice a year with the Able Too Forum to co-ordinate activities for disabled people along with parents and partners. The Leisure Centres hold biannual meet-the-manager forums to help shape future activity programmes. Quarterly customer user forms with people of different backgrounds are also planned, but none have taken place yet due to the pandemic.

In 2021, Everyone Active completed a consultation with You1st (a local charity that supports local residents with problems relating to mental health, addiction, debt and poverty). This was extended to a partnership, supporting You1st's 'Community Cans Can Help' project, which provides drop-off points for donations of canned food at each site. Their Food Help Service (in Stapenhill) is run entirely by volunteers and exists to re-distribute food donated by individuals and business and to help those in need during the challenging times.

The Leisure Centres rate customer satisfaction using categories 'Poor, Average, Good, Very good and Excellent'. In summary from April 2020 to March 2021, the average score across all sites was 72.15% in the collective group 'Good / Very good / Excellent'.

### *Leisure and Culture*

The Brewhouse Arts Team conduct quarterly meetings with a 'User Group' – these are groups that use the building on a regular basis and are part of the *Creative community* in Burton. The team meet with members from 5 different voluntary/charity groups. The groups share feedback on the quality of service received and offer information on future requirements. The groups are consulted on any plans for the future of the Brewhouse and input into any small operational changes required to improve the service – this includes consultation on things like the running of the café bar, pricing reviews and future programming. The Brewhouse support the groups through marketing, technical support, joint opportunities such as the Children's

Festival to reach new audiences/members and making connections with other local groups.

Customers are also able to provide regular feedback through a Net Promotor Score – sent via email following a visit to one of the venues. This provides an opportunity for all customers to feedback on the service and for The Brewhouse, Arts and/or CFS teams to respond and make improvements. The website also has a feedback form and there is a feedback unit located in The Brewhouse.

### *Housing Services*

The Housing Options team provide advice and assistance to enable homeless households to allow identification of the needs and response to the appropriate support services. The team also provides advice and assistance to enable homeless households to identify a suitable and sustainable housing solution which meets their needs. Most adverse decisions contain a specific paragraph applying the Public Sector Equality Duty to the individual and the decision being taken – this measure ensures that a sharp focus is placed on (i) whether a member of the household are under a disability (or have another relevant protected characteristic), (ii) the extent of such disability, (iii) the likely effect of the disability, when taken together with any other features, and (iv) whether the decision can still be justified in the circumstances.

### **Objective 3: Discrimination, harassment and hate crime is not tolerated**

To support the general equality duty which aims to “eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.”

Our aim is for discrimination, harassment and hate crime related to disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or sexual orientation to not be tolerated, both in the community and in the workforce. Our aim is for everyone to have the confidence to report incidents of harassment, discrimination, victimisation, and hate crime, and to be confident that it will be dealt with robustly. We aim for good relations to be promoted between and within communities.

Information on discrimination, hate crime, harassment and the standards of behaviour expected from employees of the Council is communicated to new starters during the induction programme. The Council’s Dignity at Work, Equality in Employment Policy Statement and Single Equality Scheme, which undergo regular review, provide guidance for staff members on these topics. Incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in our workforce are recorded and appropriate action is taken in line with HR policies.

At the Customer Service Centres and the Meadowside Leisure Centre, Uttoxeter Leisure Centres and Shobnall Leisure Complex, Violent, Aggressive, and Threatening Behaviour (VATB) forms are completed where members of staff are subjected to abuse, aggression and violence. Perpetrators are informed that the Council will not tolerate any such behaviour, under the Violent, Aggressive and Threatening Behaviour policy (in some cases consequences could be exclusion from the premises).

If the Planning team receives a consultation response which is abusive in any way, Officers take a sensible approach when considering whether to make them public (it is a requirement to make them available to the residents).

Residents are informed of hate crime and discrimination reporting channels via our website, and any incidents of hate crime or incidents reported to the Council are recorded and action is taken as appropriate. Anti-social behaviour, motivated by hatred for the victim and related to a protected characteristic, is identified and dealt with appropriately. Racist and offensive graffiti is removed within 24 hours of being reported to the Council.

The Council finances a Target Hardening Scheme, which is operated in partnership with the Police and other members of the MARAC group. It improves home security to prevent further issues.

Households suffering discrimination in the community can, in severe cases, be considered homeless and receive temporary accommodation.

## **Objective 4: Our workforce, and workforce policies, support equality**

We aim for our workforce policies and practices to not discriminate, provide equal opportunities for employees to progress and develop and to be responsive to the needs of the workforce. We also aim for our workforce to understand and support our equality commitments. Our Equality in Employment Policy Statement states that “equality applies to all our employment policies and practices and at all stages of employment including recruitment and selection, learning and development, career development, working relationships, disciplinary procedures, redundancy and retirement.” East Staffordshire Borough Council recognises that our employees are our most valuable asset and is committed to:

- ensuring that all employees are treated with dignity and respect and that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated;
- making training, development and progression opportunities available to all staff;
- ensuring that all of our employment policies and practices reflect our commitments to equality and fairness;
- fostering good relations between people of different groups within the workforce and external parties such as job applicants.

### **Training**

The Council continues to develop our staff members’ understanding of equality through e-learning and face-to-face training. A module on equality is part of the e-induction programme, which is required to be completed by all new employees. In addition, through the period 2018-21 staff have attended training on the following topics:

Equality and Diversity  
Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention  
Mental Health Awareness for Customer Service  
Safeguarding and First Aid  
Dementia Awareness  
Menopause Awareness  
Loss and Bereavement Awareness  
Wellbeing and Mood Management

The Council has a number of appointed Mental Health First Aiders across the Council’s divisions with contact information available at all times.

Equality briefing (in the form of a session or as an e-learning module) continues to be a permanent part of the Councillor Induction Programme following elections.

One of the Council’s Core Competencies, updated in 2016, includes an understanding of equality as part of the ‘safety and risk’ competency. Each member of staff is required to consider how well they meet the requirements of the competency during their annual appraisal.

### **Workforce Information**

Annual workforce profiles are created and published on our website, the 2021 Workforce Profile has been published and includes information on:

- The composition of the workforce by gender, age, ethnicity and disability and the return to work rate following maternity leave. Information on gender is also broken down by part-time / full-time / casual / temporary staff and pay scale.
- Individuals who applied to, who were shortlisted and who were appointed to job at the Council by gender, ethnicity, disability, and age (information on sexual orientation and religion or belief is not currently published due to small numbers of people providing this data).
- Staff leavers by gender, age, ethnicity and disability.

Employees can update their equality information via the self-service HR system. Over time we hope that sufficient information is provided from existing staff related to sexual orientation and religion or belief that this information can also be published.

Workforce equality information informs policy decisions via EHIA's.

Complying with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, the Council continues to publish its annual gender pay gap report within the expected deadlines.

### **Disability Confident Employer and MINDFUL Employer**

Following the migration from the 'two tick' disability accreditation to the Disability Confident scheme in 2016, the Council reviewed its accreditation, completed the self-assessment and was awarded with a Disability Confident Employer Level 2 in 2017 and again in 2020. During the recruitment process, all applicants, who state that they have a disability, are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria on the person specification for the role. The Council supports adjustments and flexible working for members of staff with disabilities.

East Staffordshire Borough Council is a signatory to the MINDFUL Employer initiative and completed its first reflective review in 2020. The initiative enhances the Authority's commitment to its potential job applicants and employees to challenge any type of discrimination, to promote a culture of equality, inclusion, awareness and support, and to cultivate a positive attitude about mental health and wellbeing across all levels.

The Council is also a part of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Dementia Action Alliance, which is an alliance for organisations across the county of Staffordshire and the city of Stoke-on-Trent, to connect, share best practice and take action to radically improve the lives of people living with dementia and their carers by making the county a more dementia-friendly place.

We aim to encourage job applications from all communities and the retention of staff from all communities and groups. Job vacancies are advertised widely using different channels – electronically through the *We Manage Jobs* portal<sup>8</sup> and social media (Twitter) as well as job posters in community buildings, for example mosques. The Flexible Working and Flexible Working Hours policies, which form part of our family-friendly policies, are regularly refreshed and consistently applied. As with all policies, HR policies are required to have an equality and health impact assessment when they are created or reviewed and following their approval, they are communicated to all members of staff via the weekly staff briefing.

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<sup>8</sup> We Manage Jobs, ESBC:

<https://www.wmjobs.co.uk/employer/1001/east-staffordshire-borough-council/>

## East Staffordshire – The Population Context

Around 120,923 people live in East Staffordshire<sup>9</sup> across 21 wards of varying size. In the 10 years between the 2001 Census and the 2011 Census the population of East Staffordshire has increased by 9.5%. By 2025 a small population increase of 6% is projected, with much larger growth in people aged 65 and over (23%) and people aged 85 and over (42%) in the population.

**Age:** The median age of East Staffordshire residents is 41.9 years, which is slightly above the national and regional age of 39. Children represent 22.9% of the Borough's residents – which is slightly above the national figure of 22.5 % and the Staffordshire proportion of 20.4%. Alongside 19.4% of the borough's population are aged 65 and above, which is above the national rate (18.5%) but below the Staffordshire figure of 22%. Estimated 5% of borough's residents are aged 80 or over, which is similar to the proportion for Staffordshire<sup>7</sup>.

**Ethnicity:** 13.8% of the borough's residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is more than double the Staffordshire average but below regional and national figures of around a fifth. The largest ethnic group, excluding white British, within East Staffordshire is Asian / Asian British: Pakistani, which accounts for 4.9% of the population. The second largest ethnic group within the borough is white other, accounting for 3.7% of the borough's residents. This group includes those from the EU accession states, such as Poland.

**Disability:** 17.7% of the borough's residents say their day to day activities are limited, which represents over 20,100 people. 7.9% of residents state that their activities are limited a lot, which is below the national, regional and county figures.

**Religion or belief:** 68.7% of borough residents state that they are Christian, and 6.4% state that they are Muslim. Over a fifth of borough residents (23.6%) state that they have no religion, which is similar to regional and county figures.

**Sexual Orientation:** The Census does not collect information about sexual orientation. The Office of National Statistics announced that around 2.7% of UK adults aged 16+ identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2019 (increase from 2.2% in 2018).<sup>10</sup>

**Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Half (50.1%) of the borough's usual residents aged 16 and over are married. This is above the national and regional figures but below the Staffordshire marriage rate of 51.4%. 165 borough residents were in a registered same-sex civil partnership at the time of the 2011 Census.

**Gender Reassignment:** The data available regarding transgender communities is scarce. The estimated number of transgender people, including people who identify as non-binary, in the UK is around 1 per cent of the population. There is an ongoing discussion and research around how to arrive at an accurate population estimate. This is likely to be observed with the release of Census 2021 later in 2022.

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<sup>9</sup> The Office for National Statistics:

[Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#), mid-2020

<sup>10</sup> The Office for National Statistics: [Sexual orientation, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Statistical data on East Staffordshire and its wards can be found via the following links:

- East Staffordshire Borough Council: <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/statistics>
- Office for National Statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/help/localstatistics>
- Staffordshire Observatory: <http://www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk>

Please note the source of all 2011 Census data is the Office for National Statistics Crown Copyright 2012.