



Gheluvelt Park Splashpad



World Cafe Event



The Guildhall



Worcester
CITY COUNCIL

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy **2022-2025**

*“Stronger and
Connected Communities”*

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Crowds at The Worcester Show



Councillor Marc Bayliss
Leader, Conservative group



Councillor Lynn Denham
Leader, Labour group



Councillor Louis Stephen
Leader, Green group



Councillor Mel Allcott
Leader, Liberal Democrat group

Foreword

Our vision for Worcester City

Worcester City Council has an important role to play in helping to reduce inequalities in the City of Worcester and safeguard the rights of people protected by the Equality Act 2010.

As a public body and a local organisation, we recognise that the Council has a special responsibility to show leadership through our actions and words on equality, diversity and inclusion. We will promote the message that equality is everyone's business and that doing things better and more inclusively can benefit everyone.

In the Council's City Plan 2022-2027 we set out our collective vision, of a city that is prosperous, accessible, diverse and inclusive; with great opportunities for work, leisure, sport and tourism alongside a quality of life that is attractive to all.

Tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity will help the Council to achieve its vision for the City.

We will lead by example, work with others, invest in communities, and listen and act when people tell us how we can deliver better services.

We invite you to read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This document explains what actions Worcester City Council will take over the next three years to become excellent at listening to, and meeting the needs of, everyone who is protected by the Equality Act 2010.

**Our Strategy is available in different formats and language.
Please ask us if you need help with this.**



Worcester High Street

Introduction: why do we need a Strategy?

Worcester is a vibrant City that is increasingly culturally, economically and socially diverse. The Council values this diversity and aims to support and encourage it. We also take a leading role in seeking to increase equality and inclusion in the City.

We are committed to increasing equality, providing better opportunities inside our organisation, within our services and in the wider City, recognising that diversity and inclusion can deliver better outcomes for everyone. We recognise that in many cases, inequalities can shape or even define people's life chances.

We are committed to promoting and supporting good relations and cohesion between all communities in the City so that everyone feels welcome and safe in Worcester and can benefit from the different perspectives and experiences of different groups.

The Council has legal duties to promote equality. The Equality Act 2010 defines the following as "Protected Characteristics":

- ◆ **Age**
- ◆ **Disability**
- ◆ **Gender Reassignment**
- ◆ **Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- ◆ **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- ◆ **Race**
- ◆ **Religion or Belief**
- ◆ **Sex**
- ◆ **Sexual Orientation**



Asian Mela dancers

Everyone could be affected by one or more of the Protected Characteristics at some point in their life. It is against the law to discriminate, victimise or harass people because of these Protected Characteristics.

Additionally, public bodies such as the Council have a positive legal duty to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with different Protected Characteristics.

As well as meeting our legal duties, there are many other good reasons for the Council to aim for excellence in our equality diversity and inclusion practices. People are more likely to have better confidence and trust in public services if they believe that they will be listened to and treated with dignity and respect.

Excellent equality, diversity and inclusion practice means good use of public resources because we are providing services that people want and which are appropriate to their needs.

Everyone working for and representing the Council has a duty to promote greater inclusiveness and equality. If the Council's staff and councillors are representative of the diverse communities they serve, this will help ensure a broad range of perspectives and experiences are informing the Council decisions being made and the services delivered.

The Council is more likely to be able to recruit its workforce and its councillors from a wider pool of talent if we are actively demonstrating our commitment to diversity. Staff and councillors are more likely to feel motivated and committed if they feel valued and respected for their individual contributions.

This Strategy sets out how the Council will achieve excellent equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes over the next three years, defining our "Equality Objective" and the specific aims we will focus on.

The Strategy guides the work of all staff and councillors in the Council as we deliver public services together. We will also refer to our Strategy when working with partner organisations and contractors.

Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy links to and supports other important overarching Council plans and strategies including our City Plan, as well as plans we put in place to deliver specific services or programmes of work within the Council.

By using this Strategy and its Annual Action Plan to set out our priorities for the coming years we will enable a consistent corporate focus on achieving greater equality, diversity, and inclusion for everyone in our City.

How have we produced this Strategy?

The Council provides a wide range of services to people in the City of Worcester, and we have already taken many actions to meet people's specific needs and demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We recognised that the Council's overall corporate approach was due for renewal and also that the results of the 2021 Census will reflect that the people who live in Worcester are increasingly diverse in their characteristics and their needs.

We decided to review the equality actions we had taken and assess our own performance, using the Local Government Association's Equality Framework, 2021. This is a national framework which shows councils whether their performance on equality, diversity and inclusion should be judged as: Developing, Achieving or Excellent.



Worcester 10k Run wheelchair competitors

These standards are defined as follows:

Developing - The developing level criteria contain the basic building blocks for each priority. An organisation at the developing level has made an organisational commitment to improving equality. It is putting in place processes to deliver on equality issues and is working towards meeting and exceeding the statutory requirements.

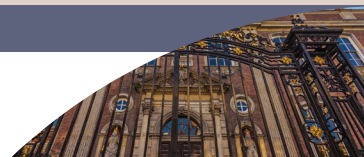
Achieving - An organisation at the achieving level has policies, processes and procedures in place and is delivering some good equality outcomes. It is not only meeting but can demonstrate exceeding statutory requirements.

Excellent - An organisation at the excellent level has mainstreamed equality throughout the organisation and can demonstrate that it is delivering significant outcomes across its services that are making a difference. The organisation not only meets but exceeds statutory requirements and it is an exemplar council for equality and diversity in the local government and wider public sector.

Many of our staff and councillors got involved in the self-assessment exercise and we identified evidence of the good practice in the Council, as well as areas for improvement. This was a detailed and structured exercise, working through all the standards in the LGA Equality Framework to produce an evidence base of the Council's performance.

The outcome was that the Council can demonstrate specific examples of excellent work on equality diversity and inclusion, but that we need to ensure these practices are adopted widely and consistently within the organisation. Then we can also lead by example with other partner organisations in the City, to tackle specific identified priorities for equality.

This work has shown us how we can become excellent in equality, diversity and inclusion and this has helped us develop the Strategy for the next three years.



Our Equality Objective

“To achieve excellence in our equality practice, as measured by the Equality Framework for Local Government, by 2025”

The Equality Act 2010 requires councils (and other public sector organisations) to set at least one equality objective every four years. Worcester City Council's objective covers all aspects of our work, all our services and everyone protected by the law.

We have set ourselves a single, clear objective to be delivered through this Strategy. This is called our Equality Objective. Our objective is to become excellent, as measured by the LGA's Equality Framework.

Worcestershire Pride event



By working through the four key areas set out in the LGA's Equality Framework, during the period of this Strategy, we can achieve our overall Equality Objective. **These four areas are called our Excellence Aims.**

The four Excellence Aims and their themes are:

Understanding and working with our communities



- ♦ Collecting and sharing information
- ♦ Analysing and using data and information
- ♦ Effective community engagement
- ♦ Fostering good community relations
- ♦ Participation in public life

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment



- ♦ Leadership
- ♦ Priorities and working in partnership
- ♦ Assessing equality impact in policy and decision taking
- ♦ Equality objectives and annual reporting
- ♦ Performance monitoring and scrutiny

Responsive services and customer care



- ♦ Commissioning and procuring services
- ♦ Integration of equality objectives into service planning
- ♦ Service delivery

Diverse and engaged workforce



- ♦ Learning and development
- ♦ Health and wellbeing
- ♦ Workforce diversity
- ♦ Inclusive strategies and policies
- ♦ Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data.



Excellence Aim: Understanding and working with our communities

The Council is good at getting to know individual communities and working closely with them. We support lots of community events and initiatives in our City. We need to do more to get closer to communities who do not usually connect with the Council. We need to do more to share and use information about our communities across the Council as a whole, not just at a service level.

We have set out opposite, examples of our current progress and how we will measure if we are excellent.



Covid 19 jab for city residents



Achievement



Excellence

<p>Collecting and sharing information</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Collecting information about our customers and communities through lots of different methods</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Joining up the collection and sharing of information within the Council so that it gives a better picture of our communities and their needs</p>
<p>Analysing and using data and information</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Collecting and analysing information at a service level</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Collecting and analysing information at an organisational level</p>
<p>Effective community engagement</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Building strong and lasting relationships with communities in our City</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Finding different ways to communicate with people who do not usually connect with the Council</p>
<p>Fostering good community relations</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Taking an active role in supporting diverse community events in the city</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Helping and encouraging people speak out against discrimination and harassment of others</p>
<p>Participation in public life</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Inviting lots of different groups of people to join our civic events</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Helping under-represented groups to participate more and making sure methods of communication are accessible and effective</p>





Excellence Aim: Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

The Council is good at speaking out on particular issues that affect people protected by the Equality Act. We use equality impact assessments to check our decisions and policies. We need to do more to make sure our leadership strength in equality diversity and inclusion is consistent across the Council and at all levels. We recognise that the Council can work with other organisations in the City to improve inequalities, but we need to clearly set out our priorities.

We have set out opposite, examples of our current progress and how we will measure if we are excellent.



Light Night Jukebox



Achievement



Excellence

<p>Leadership</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Many of our councillors speak out publicly on equality diversity and inclusion matters in our communities and from their own experiences</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Ensuring all managers and decision makers in the Council are knowledgeable and feel confident to contribute on equality diversity and inclusion matters</p>
<p>Priorities and working in partnership</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Delivering specific projects with other organisations in the city which help equality diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Communicating with other organisations what our priorities are, based on information about needs and building our equality networks with other organisations</p>
<p>Assessing equality impact in policy and decision taking</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Using equality impact assessments to inform our significant decisions</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Training our staff and councillors to ask deeper questions on equality impacts and to raise equalities considerations into proposals at an early stage in design</p>
<p>Equality objectives and annual reporting</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Publishing equality objectives and reporting legal requirements</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Making this annual review process more of a dynamic conversation through our Council management boards and Committee system of decision making</p>
<p>Performance monitoring and scrutiny</p>	<p>We are achieving by: Involving staff and councillors in our equalities self-assessment process and scrutinising our own performance</p>	<p>We will be excellent by: Identifying a Committee and a Member Champion which will sponsor this improvement work throughout the period of the Strategy</p>



Excellence Aim: Responsive services and customer care

The Council is good at providing services which meet needs at a very local level. We offer many of our services face to face or through other accessible methods and we try to respond to individual equalities needs when requested. We need to do more to ensure that customer feedback at an organisational level is analysed for equality implications. We can do more to use equalities information to actively plan the future of our services to meet the diverse needs of our customers.

We have set out opposite, examples of our current progress and how we will measure if we are excellent.



Care home tea party



Achievement



Excellence

Commissioning and procuring services

We are achieving by:

Ensuring that contractors that provide services on behalf of the Council are aware of their equality obligations

We will be excellent by:

Making sure that the benefits of the Council's own improvements in this Strategy are also matched by our contractors

Integration of equality objectives into service planning

We are achieving by:

Exploring at a service level, cases where our customers' needs may be changing or not sufficiently met by our services. Using feedback from specific consultation responses to inform service planning

We will be excellent by:

Making sure we have used relevant information about customers collected across the whole Council to proactively plan for design and delivery of services

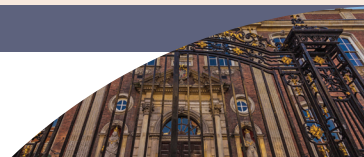
Service delivery

We are achieving by:

Responding to locally identified needs and customer feedback to tailor our services when we reasonably can to meet individual equalities needs

We will be excellent by:

Learning from customer feedback and complaints as well as best practice within the Council and from elsewhere.





Excellence Aim: Diverse and engaged workforce

The Council is good at providing the policies that support staff in managing their own diverse needs and supporting others. Staff say they are proud to work for the Council and many have demonstrated their commitment to equality diversity and inclusion through individual actions. We need to do more to make sure that all staff feel trained and confident to recognise their own contributions and areas for improvement. We also need to make sure that across the whole organisation, we have actions in place to recruit and retain a diverse workforce which is reflective of the communities the Council serves.

We have set out opposite, examples of our current progress and how we will measure if we are excellent.



Worcester Show
Cookery stand



Achievement



Excellence

Learning and development

We are achieving by:
The commitment of staff to want to engage and do the right things on equality diversity and inclusion practice

We will be excellent by:
Enhancing our training offer for all staff and councillors so that people feel more confident to take personal responsibility and see how they can make an individual contribution

Health and wellbeing

We are achieving by:
Having an overall focus on staff health and wellbeing, providing occupational health support and mental health first aiders

We will be excellent by:
Looking more closely at services where health and wellbeing is an ongoing challenge due to the physical or mental demands of the role

Workforce diversity

We are achieving by:
Exploring at a service level, innovative ways to recruit people from under-represented communities

We will be excellent by:
Taking a more proactive and organisational look at the barriers to diverse recruitment and retention

Inclusive strategies and policies

We are achieving by:
Having a range of strategies and policies which our staff tell us support them to manage individual differences, including caring responsibilities and health needs

We will be excellent by:
Ensuring that our policies are applied consistently across the Council and that managers are confident in dealing with individual differences

Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data

We are achieving by:
Collecting workforce data and making sure this is shared with senior managers

We will be excellent by:
Using the information we collect to help us identify areas where we need to improve our equalities actions and policies in the workplace

Achieving our objective

Everyone's responsibilities

Everyone who works for the Council has a role to play in achieving the Excellence Aims of this Strategy because all council staff and councillors have responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

These responsibilities are, in summary:

All staff:

- Being aware of the Council's legal equality duties and our organisation's commitments and what they mean practically for them in their roles.
- Treating customers, colleagues and residents with dignity and respect whilst responding positively and appropriately to meet diverse needs.
- Challenging and reporting to managers incidents where equality practice has not been followed, including discrimination, harassment and bullying.

All managers:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of their personal responsibilities in relation to promoting equalities.
- Ensuring continued improvement and equality outcomes in relation to the accessibility and delivery of services to customers.
- Creating an inclusive workplace culture in which all staff can thrive and reach their potential.
- Ensuring all staff are supported and trained to relevant standards so that they can perform their roles effectively.
- Managing all staff fairly and equitably through the consistent and fair application of HR policies and procedures.
- Setting clear and consistent standards of behaviours in line with the Council's values and promptly dealing with any instances of inappropriate behaviour, including discrimination, harassment and bullying.

All councillors:

- Championing equality, diversity and inclusion within the Council, including undertaking a scrutiny role to ensure that equality considerations are integrated in the decision making and governance of the Council.
- Leading, supporting and advocating for the diverse people and communities they represent.
- Using equality impact assessments to inform decision making to avoid discrimination, promote inclusion and wherever possible increase fairness in the City.

Lead responsibilities for this Strategy

The Council's Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for setting the Council's Equality Objective. This committee will be responsible for approving the Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and for approving an Annual Action Plan which will set out specific actions to help ensure the Strategy gets delivered. The Personnel and General Purposes Sub Committee will monitor the progress of the Action Plan during each year in order to report back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council will appoint a Member Champion for Equality Diversity and Inclusion. Their role will be to promote the importance of the Strategy across the Council's other committees and with councillors generally. The Member Champion will also offer support and challenge to the lead officers in the Council responsible for delivering the Strategy and the Action Plan.

The Council's Corporate Leadership Team is responsible for appointing a lead officer for delivery of the Strategy and development of the Annual Action Plan. The Corporate Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient resources available and that the Strategy and the Action Plan are communicated to staff, councillors and customers.

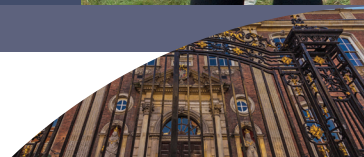
The Council's Corporate Management Team will be responsible for ensuring that equality diversity and inclusion is part of regular service planning and monitoring. The Corporate Management Team and their team of managers and supervisors will ensure that the LGA's Equality Framework is reviewed again in order to prepare the Annual Action Plan in future years.



Worcester 10k Run



The Worcester Show



Using feedback from our customers, communities and partners

- ◆ We will use feedback from our customers, communities and partner organisations to track our progress on the Strategy and to make sure our Annual Action Plan has the right priorities set out.
- ◆ We will publicise the Strategy in different ways and encourage feedback to help us design the Annual Action Plan for future years.
- ◆ We will celebrate examples of excellent practice within the Council and make sure our customers know how they can tell us what would improve our performance, in order to deliver better outcomes.

Please get in touch and talk to us about why Equality Diversity and Inclusion matters to you in Worcester.
We want to know what we can do better and also what is working well.

You can contact us in any of the following ways:

- ◆ Email us at equality@worcester.gov.uk
- ◆ Phone the Council's Customer Services team on **01905 722233** and ask us to call you back.
- ◆ Visit our **Customer Services team at the Guildhall, High Street Worcester** and we can arrange to talk to you there. The Guildhall is accessible for visitors with disabilities. If you have any special access requirements then you may want to call to check arrangements, ahead of your visit.

We look forward to talking to you.

www.worcester.gov.uk



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025

"Stronger and Connected Communities"

Worcester Wolves
Basketball Team