

REPORTS OF CABINET CHAMPIONS 2022/23 (3)

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CABINET CHAMPION

This Annual Report of the Cabinet Champion for Equality and Diversity, Cllr Mara Makunura, provides an overview of the role and expectations for the year, key activity achieved in 2022/23 and recommendations for 2023/24.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 July 2022 considered the priorities for the Equality and Diversity Cabinet Champion in 2022/23. These are attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 This report sets out the work of the Equality and Diversity Cabinet Champion over 2022/23 in taking forward the activities and priorities listed at Appendix A.
- 1.3 I would like to thank Council Officers who have worked with me over the last year to support the activity listed below.

2. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITY IN 2022/23

Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group

- 2.1 One of my early actions as Champion was to establish the Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group (RAAG). The overarching aim of RAAG is to develop the awareness in the borough around accessibility and safety for residents and visitors and to highlight the importance of inclusivity for all.
- 2.2 The group has met on four occasions (July, October, January and March) with another meeting scheduled for 26 June 2023. At these meetings RAAG have received a variety of presentations from organisations such as Hampshire County Council, the deputy Police and Crime Commissioner as well as receiving briefings from Rushmoor officers on taxi licensing policy, access to polling stations and access to parks. There are over 40 members of the RAAG group and further information can be found at - [Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group - RAAG | Facebook](#). New Members are always welcome to join the group which meets in a hybrid fashion to increase accessibility to the meetings.

Rushmoor Cohesive Communities

- 2.3 I have also established the Rushmoor Cohesive Communities group (RCC) which contributes to the action in the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan to broaden engagement with communities across Rushmoor.
- 2.4 The RCC Group has met on two occasions (November and February) and has around 15 different nationalities represented at the moment. The first two meetings have discussed community events and business support/assistance. This group is particularly interested in exploring

opportunities to hold a Rushmoor Cultural Day which would be an opportunity to celebrate the many different cultures and nationalities within the Borough. Linked to these discussions I have also had meetings with the West End Centre and Council officers to discuss how we promote the diverse range of arts and culture in Rushmoor.

- 2.5 I also spoke at Overview and Scrutiny last year about opportunities to link my work with that of Rushmoor International Association. With the Leader of the Council and Mayor, we welcomed the Mayor of Gweru in Zimbabwe and we gave them a tour of the Borough. The Mayor of Gweru is interested in developing longer-term links with the Borough.

Black History Month

- 2.5 October saw the Council celebrate Black History Month with the Council hosting an Art and Photography Exhibition showcasing pieces from Farnborough College of Technology, local writers and historical photographs. The event was well received and the launch event was attended by students who were displaying their art, members of the community as well as a number of Councillors. In addition to the art event, the Council's social media was also used to profile a series of prominent local people to ask what Black History Month means to them and why it is important to celebrate it locally. Work is now underway to plan for Black History Month 2023.

International Women's Day

- 2.6 I also worked with Council officers to produce a video to celebrate International Women's Day in March 2023. This brought together women from both the Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group and the Rushmoor Cohesive Communities Group to talk about their experiences of International Women's Day.

Supporting Homes for Ukraine

- 2.7 Following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in March 2022, I have attended events that have been designed to support these new residents and to help them feel welcome. In particular, in September 2022 I was delighted to attend a Family Welcome event in Princes Gardens to meet with some of the families who have come to live locally.

Equality and Diversity Action Plan

- 2.8 Over the course of the year, I have met with the Portfolio Holder and Assistant Chief Executive to brief them on the work and the outcomes from the Champion Role. This has helped to ensure that the activity listed above has been in support of the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- 2.9 In support of the activity listed above and the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan, I have attended the Disability Works Job Fair held in the Princes Hall in January 2023. The Shots Foundation is also assisting with a newly formed visually impaired football taking place at the Garrison once a month and I have been supporting this.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 A focus over the year has been to put in place structures to support the Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan and there are now two operational groups in the form of RAAG and RCC. I would recommend that consideration is given to the longer-term future for these groups and how they will be supported to grow and develop as they have shown that they have a key role to play.
- 3.2 As it is now two years since the Equality and Diversity Peer Review was undertaken and the Council's Action Plan was produced, I would also recommend that this is reviewed and refreshed to ensure that all actions remain relevant and up to date.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix A - Equality and Diversity Champion Roles and Responsibilities for 2022/23

Appendix A – Equality and Diversity Champion Roles and Responsibilities 2022/23

Equality and Diversity Cabinet Champion

Purpose: Support the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and work with partners to address issues for people with disabilities

Roles:

(1) Work with the Council's Community Development and Communications teams to identify and promote cultural, religious and heritage festivals and events in the Borough

(2) Promote engagement with under-reached groups across the Borough

(3) Monitor the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and influence proposals for further phases of its delivery

(4) Work to improve awareness of Members and Officers of equality, diversity and disability issues in the Borough

(5) Report back regularly to the Council, and especially the Cabinet, on plans, projects and activities

Champion Priorities in 2022/23

(1) Act as the Council's representative on the evolving Disabilities Forum and assist with the development and delivery of its priorities

(2) Support the delivery of the agreed projects from the Equality and Diversity Action Plan

(3) Support the Council's engagement work to improve understanding of satisfaction levels within and needs of minority groups within the Borough

(4) Encourage minority communities to be involved with local events organised by the Council and other bodies