

Equality and Diversity

Strategy | 2025-2028

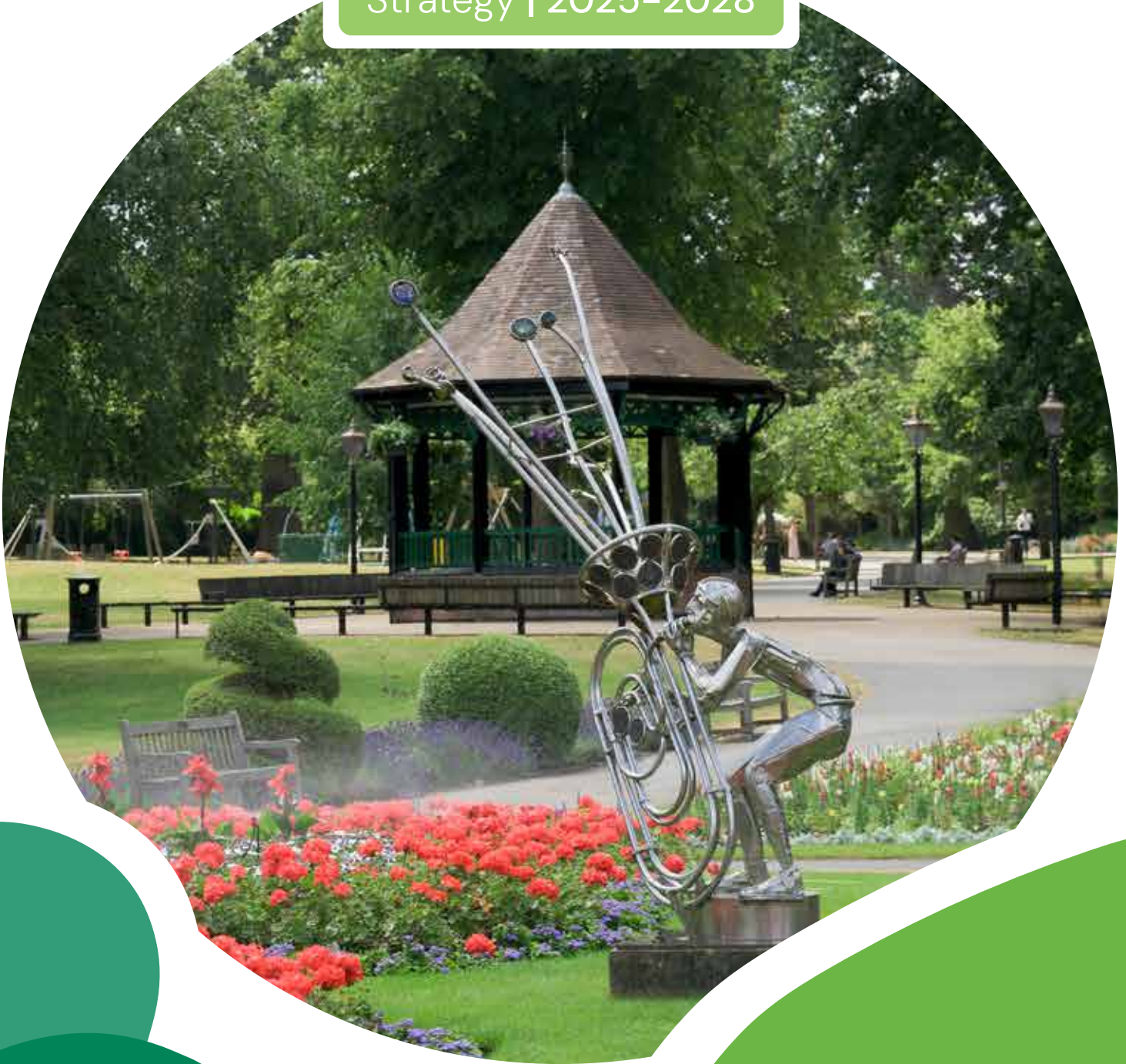




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Foreword

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy reflects our unwavering commitment to equity in our services, workforce practices and communities.

Working with our partners and communities we will strive to reduce inequalities and maximise potential across our borough. We will reinforce our inclusive message of a fair environment for all.

We are proud of the progress we made so far, and we remain dedicated to continuous improvement, guided and shaped by all our communities.

This EDI Strategy underpins our corporate priorities to deliver A Healthier Rugby, A Thriving Rugby, A Greener Rugby, and A Fairer place to live and work.



Councillor Maggie O'Rourke

Portfolio holder

Partnerships and Wellbeing

Rugby's Equality and Diversity vision

Rugby wants to create a borough that everyone can be proud of. Where all communities are valued, and we use the knowledge and experiences of the people of Rugby to shape its future.

Rugby is committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination and promoting good relations between all people. Rugby Borough Council (RBC) is also committed to promoting equality within its' workforce, creating a workforce that is inclusive and representative of its residents.

The Council will work in line with the Equality Act, ensuring that it does not discriminate or victimise those with protected characteristics, promotes equality of opportunity and fosters good relations. The protected characteristics in the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religious beliefs, sex and sexual orientation. Where relevant, the Council will also consider the impact of socio-economic and environmental factors on equality. The Council will also work to recognise the impact that may be experienced by those with multiple protected characteristics, referred to as intersectionality.

Rugby aims to place their key behaviours and values at the centre of everything we do. These key values will help Rugby to achieve an excellent service for all of its

residents, regardless of background. This strategy focusses on putting customers first by setting an objective to engage with customers effectively to shape policies and services that work for them.



Rugby has recognised the importance of equality and diversity by placing it as one of the objectives in its Corporate Strategy 2025–2035. This strategy will support the Council's objective to create a Fair Rugby, by embedding equality practices into the everyday workings of the Council. How the strategy will support the Corporate Strategy is outlined below:



A Healthier Rugby – to support people to live healthier, longer and more independent lives.

The strategy supports working with community groups and key stakeholders to improve access to health and wellbeing promoting behaviours, such as access to green spaces and leisure facilities. Additionally, prioritising mental health and wellbeing in the workplace for all staff.



A Thriving Rugby – to deliver a thriving economy which bring borough-wide investment and regenerates the town centre

Ensuring that investment in the borough and regeneration of the town centre is done with the collaboration of the diverse communities of Rugby, considering the impact of investments on equality and inclusion, making sure that Rugby is a thriving place for all residents. This will be achieved through the use of Equality Impact Assessments as part of the decision-making process of the Council.



A Greener Rugby – to protect the environment and ensure the borough adapts to climate change

Climate change tends to more greatly impact those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged. Protecting the environment and making sure that the borough is prepared for the impact of climate change will help reduce inequalities.



A Fair Rugby – to reduce inequalities and improve housing access across the borough

The strategy aims to ensure equality of opportunity for all staff and residents. This will be achieved by embedding equality and inclusion into all functions of the Council, making the Borough a fair place for all employees and residents.

This strategy will outline the Council's plans for Equality & Diversity for 2025 – 2028, setting four objectives. The strategy objectives have been set as a result of evidence gathered from a range of sources, to ensure a data driven approach to equality and diversity.



Consultation and findings

The Annual Workforce Equality Report is published on the Council's website and is used to identify whether the Council's workforce is representative of the residents of Rugby, as well as whether there is equality of opportunity for all employees. The 2024 report showed that there are gaps in data reporting, making it difficult to draw conclusions from some of the data. Additionally, the report identified a large difference in the success of candidates of different ethnic origins during interviews with the Council.

There Report also has some positive findings, there was no significant difference in the success rate of candidates who are disabled or non-disabled in the recruitment process, perhaps due in part to the Council's participation in the Disability Confident Employer scheme. As well as this, male and female candidates had equal rates of success in the recruitment process.

Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) Report is a comprehensive tool designed by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), of which RBC is a member. This tool is a series of questions to identify areas of strength and in need of development for inclusion within an organisation.

Upon completion of the TIDE benchmark, it has been identified that RBC has strengths in Talent Management & Development with a strong onboarding process and an ever-increasing number of opportunities for training and development. The Council provides EDI training as part of its induction process and is currently rolling out mandatory Dignity at Work training for all staff, with plans for providing training in Inclusive Recruitment.

The report highlighted some areas that require development; while the Council has an Equality & Diversity Strategy, there is little accountability and no action plan to support its objectives. This new strategy aims to address this by creating an action plan and delivering reviews of progress to the leadership team. The report also highlighted the need for a focus on inclusive leadership, the need for the leadership to take a proactive approach to communicating and promoting inclusion across the organisation.

There have been both internal and external consultations, feedback of which has been used to develop this strategy. This strategy will also be subject to an annual review by the Corporate Equality & Diversity Officer, to review progress towards the Objectives set out. They will also be responsible for developing an Action Plan, with measurable outcomes to track progress towards these outcomes

Objective 1

An Engaged and diverse Workforce

Ensuring that our workforce represents the diversity of Rugby, helps us to understand the needs and experiences of our residents better. Additionally, more diverse workforces are more innovative and make better decisions. An engaged workforce is more motivated, productive and has a lower turnover. An engaged workforce will feel safe to share their experiences of working at the Council to help us to make it a good place to work for everyone.

The 2024 Workforce Equality Report showed high levels of non-response on protected characteristic data, in particular religion and sexuality data. The report also identified inequality of opportunity in the recruitment process, with those of White ethnic groups being more successful at interview than other ethnic groups. Additionally, it was highlighted that those of Asian or Black ethnic groups and female employees were more likely to leave than others. This data has been used to inform the Council's strategy.

We will:

- Enhance our recruitment practices to ensure a fair and consistent recruitment process
- Create an inclusive attraction and retention strategy that supports the development of underrepresented groups.
- Use the Annual Workforce Equality Data report to monitor the diversity of our workforce and equality of opportunity
- Make employees' voices heard

By:

- Ensuring that all who are involved in the hiring process have completed training on inclusive recruitment practices.
- Working towards achieving the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award and Disability Confident Leader Status.
- Identifying underrepresented groups from the Annual Workforce Equality Data Report.
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Objective 2

Creating an Inclusive Work Environment

An inclusive work environment is one in which everyone feels safe, valued and included. An inclusive workplace gives equal access and opportunities for all, considering additional barriers that some may face. Inclusion can be measured by belonging, connection and community at work. Inclusion promotes higher levels of well-being and engagement in employees.

Focussing on diversity on its own may not solve the problem of inequality in the workplace. Objective 2 aims to build upon objective 1, ensuring that a diverse workforce feels included and valued. The aim is to create an organisational culture where a diverse workforce can thrive.

The TIDE benchmarking report identified the need to improve strategy and planning, as well as inclusive leadership. This objective outlines how the Council will improve these areas through increased accountability.

We will:

- Foster an inclusive culture where all employees feel safe and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated.
- Create a caring culture where all employees can voice their opinions
- Ensure that the workplace is accessible for all employees
- Leadership team will define and demonstrate inclusive behaviours
- Hold ourselves accountable for meeting Equality and Diversity targets.

By:

- Ensuring that all employees have completed EDI and Dignity at Work training.
- Reviewing and developing EDI training provision to ensure that it fits the needs of employees.
- Embedding the new Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment into policies and practices to promote a safer, more inclusive work environment for all.
- Monitoring equality of opportunity through the uptake of development opportunities for employees.
- Providing all staff with access to health and wellbeing services, making sure this is accessible and communicated clearly to all staff.
- Running an Employee Network Group as a forum where employees can raise issues and have a say in decisions that impact the workplace.
- Completing Access Audits for all buildings and put a schedule in place to make improvements where needed.
- Working to ensure digital accessibility in the workplace.
- Ensure all Council websites are fully accessible.
- The Leadership team holding accountability for integrating the Equality & Diversity Strategy into their service area.
- Leadership team to discuss and review the Action Plan regularly, supporting the removal of barriers where needed.

Objective 3

Understanding our Customer and Residents

Rugby is a diverse and rapidly growing community. Understanding who lives in the Borough enables us to better plan and deliver effective and accessible services to meet our residents' needs. To support our understanding, RBC needs to engage with residents effectively. We will support officers and members to engage with customers and residents effectively by developing resources and training for them.

RBC understands that ensuring access to green spaces, community support and adequate housing contributes to a healthy population and thriving places. RBC will work to ensure equal access to its services to reduce health inequalities in the borough. Working with our customers and residents will support the Council to achieve its Corporate Priorities of building a healthier and thriving community by ensuring that all residents are considered in decision-making.

We will:

- Take an evidence-based approach to community engagement activity
- Consult with diverse residents and community groups on key decisions to ensure that services meet everyone's needs
- Collect and share information on our communities
- Ensure that members have the appropriate skills to engage with diverse residents.
- Build strong and empowered communities
- Make sure that Council buildings are accessible to residents.
- Work with external partners to reduce health inequalities and promote the prevention agenda

By:

- Using diverse methods to engage with the different communities in Rugby.
- Creating a list of external stakeholders, who officers can contact for consultation on relevant projects.
- Ensuring that accessibility information for all Council buildings is available online.
- Working with local groups to understand the key issues facing residents.
- Working with external partners to ensure equal access to Council services and reduce health inequalities
- Creating a Cultural Knowledge toolbox. Containing guides to the diverse communities of Rugby, created collaboratively with those communities.
- Collecting relevant customer data, particularly in relation to protected characteristics and use this data to improve services.
- Supporting local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in the work they do to create strong communities and reduce inequalities.
- Members completing mandatory EDI training to support them in understanding how they can have an impact on making sure all residents' voices are heard.
- Consulting with relevant local organisations when implementing the updated guidance on the Equality Act, when it is released.

Objective 4

Monitoring the Impact of Services

The Equality Framework for Local Government highlights the importance of using data to inform decisions, instead of relying on assumptions, to ensure the best outcomes. To achieve this the Council will embed the use of data into Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that data is collected and used as part of the service design and review process.

We will:

- Use data to inform policy and strategy
- Feedback to residents where changes have been made as a result of consultation.
- Ensure that staff feel empowered to use equality data to make decisions
- Ensure that partners share our values and promote equality and inclusion in their practices.
- Reviewing services and policies regularly using data and consultation to gather evidence

By:

- Improving monitoring and analysis of equality data by incorporating this process into the Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA).
- Use data collected to identify potential for direct and indirect discrimination in Council functions.
- Providing training on how to complete EqIAs to ensure all officers completing the assessments have the appropriate knowledge to use them effectively.
- Creating and implementing the use of an Equality Monitoring form for use during surveys, consultation and service use and support the effective collection of protected characteristic information.
- Communicating with external stakeholders after consultation to inform them of how their feedback has been used.
- Creating a centralised EqIA review schedule, using this to prompt officers to review the impact of services using data.
- Where we work with third party organisations, ensure that they adhere to the standards required of us under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Including socio-economic and environmental factors in the EqIA process, acknowledging the impact these factors have on equality.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff:

- Being aware of the Council's legal Equality Duties and what they mean practically for them in their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure they are aware of and follow the Council's policies, code of conduct and expected behaviours
- Make sure that they are up to date with mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.
- Treating service users, colleagues and residents with dignity and respect in line with the Dignity at Work policy
- Challenging and reporting to managers/HR business partner incidents where bullying, harassment or discrimination has taken place or using self-report systems where appropriate
- If you wish to do so: attending the Employee Network Group to add input into issues that may affect you, as a characteristic holder or an ally. Otherwise speaking to a Wellbeing Champion to raise issues on your behalf.

Managers:

- Being aware of the Council's legal Equality Duties and what they mean practically for them in their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure they are aware of and follow the Council's policies, code of conduct and expected behaviours
- Make sure that they are up to date with mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.
- Treating service users, colleagues and residents with dignity and respect in line with the Dignity at Work policy
 - Challenging and reporting to managers/HR business partner incidents where bullying, harassment or discrimination has taken place or using self-report systems where appropriate



- If you wish to do so: attending the Employee Network Group to add input into issues that may affect you, as a characteristic holder or an ally. Otherwise speaking to a Wellbeing Champion to raise issues on your behalf.

Leadership:

- Discuss and review the Action Plan, support the removal of barriers to meet KPIs.
- Lead by example, demonstrating inclusive values and behaviours.
- Support and promote the work the Council are doing to create an inclusive workplace
- Ensure that their service area is using data effectively in making key decisions
- Complete EDI training offered by RBC.

Corporate Equality and Diversity Officer:

- Create an Action Plan with measurable KPIs to deliver the Equality & Diversity Strategy
- Discuss and review the Action Plan with leadership.
- Communicate an annual progress report with internal and external stakeholders
- Deliver Impact Assessment training
- Give support and feedback on EqlAs
- Ensure that EqlAs are completed and reviewed on schedule
- Ensure that all elected members have completed EDI training

Elected members:

- Undertaking scrutiny of EqlAs to ensure that equality is integrated into the decision making and governance of the Council
- Completing e-learning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Supporting and advocating for the diverse people and communities they represent in their constituencies
- Championing equality within the Council

Further information

If you are an individual, a business, or public body who would like to know more or become involved in our work to progress equality in Rugby, please get in touch with the Corporate Equality & Diversity Officer. For more information on the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Duties, please visit Equality and Human Rights Commission.

For further information on the Council's Equality & Diversity Strategy, please contact the Corporate Equality & Diversity Officer, Rebecca Ewers.

rebecca.ewers@rugby.gov.uk

Glossary of terms

Age – A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).

Disability – A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Diversity – An organisation being made up of people from many different background and identities. Also, recognising, respecting, and valuing differences in people.

Environmental factors – Environmental factors that may impact a person's behaviour and ability to access resources. Such as housing status, transport links, geography, access to services, air quality, noise pollution.

Equality – Equality refers to the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment.

Equity – The situation in which everyone is treated fairly according to their needs.

Gender reassignment – Where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

Inclusion – Creating environments where any individual or group feels welcomed, respected and valued. It ensures that all individuals can participate fully.

Inclusive leadership – This is a style of leadership that focuses on ensuring everyone feels valued, respected, and included. It involves recognising and embracing diversity, being open minded and fostering an environment where all voices are heard, while creating opportunities for everyone to contribute.

Intersectionality – The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Marriage/Civil Partnership – Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is a form of civil union between couples open to both same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy/Maternity – Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race/Ethnicity – A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

Religion/belief – Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex – A male or a female.

Sexuality – Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Socio-economic factors – Social and economic factors that affect the characteristics of communities, social groups and households. Such as child poverty, income level, education level, working hours/occupation, family/social support, access to good nutrition and social class.

Review schedule

Latest revision date: June 2025

Next review date: June 2028

Strategy owner: Rebecca Ewers

An Equality Impact Assessment on this strategy was undertaken in July 2025 and will be reviewed in July 2026.

Supporting documents

[Rugby Borough Council's Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

[Rugby Borough Council's Dignity at Work Policy](#)

[Gender Pay Gap report 2024](#)

[Workforce Equity Report 2024](#)

[The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities – GOV.UK](#)

[Armed Forces Covenant](#)

[Disability Confident Employer Scheme](#)

[Census 2021 | Rugby](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) | Warwickshire County Council](#)

