



Chesterfield Borough Council Equalities Annual Report 2014/15

Working together for equality for all



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR SHARON BLANK, CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE



Welcome to Chesterfield Borough Council's Equalities Annual Report for 2014/2015. This report highlights the work we have been doing over the last year to promote equality with our partners and the wider community.

Our organisational vision is "Putting Our Communities First". Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to treating people fairly in everything we do as a service provider, employer and community leader. We want to ensure that our employees and the people we serve receive fair and equal treatment in all aspects of our work.

This year, we further embedded our commitment to equalities by incorporating our core values into our Corporate Plan. The values inform the way in which we work as an organisation to achieve our aims for Chesterfield's communities. They include having:

- customer focus – delivering great customer service, meeting customer needs*
- a can do attitude – striving to make a difference by adopting a positive attitude*
- a one Council, one team approach – proud of what we do, working together for the greater good*
- honesty and respect – embracing diversity and treating everyone fairly*

We have continued to implement our Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy (2012 - 2015) and related Policy, which will be updated during 2015. The Policy and Strategy set out the Council's commitment to promoting and advancing equality and social inclusion while celebrating the diversity within our communities. The Council also decided to expand the scope of the policy beyond the Equality Act 2010 to include tackling inequalities, such as social and economic deprivation and health inequalities, that are not included in the Act. Over the next year, we will be reviewing and updating this Strategy to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of the local community.

We are very proud of our achievements and our continued promotion of equalities and celebration of diversity within our services and out in the wider community, particularly the continuing success of the Equality & Diversity Forum. We believe we are continuing to make a real difference to the quality of life of our residents, businesses and visitors. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our key equalities achievements and outcomes during the year.

2. CHESTERFIELD EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM

- 2.1** It has been another great year for Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum which has continued to grow, with members of the group working together to share ideas and raise awareness in the community of equality and diversity. The Forum also consults, involves and engages with local people on equalities matters relating to the wider community as well as Chesterfield Borough Council's policies and activities, providing a critical friend role on equality matters for many of the Council's services during consultation and engagement. The Forum also continues to play a key role in the scrutiny and development of Equality Impact Assessments, as part of the Council's decision making process. Forum meetings can include guest speakers, briefings, training sessions and discussions about hot topics and local services.

A message from Nicky Hoskin-Stone, Chair of the Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum



Many thanks to all our members who have made a great impact this year. We have had a variety of successful events throughout the past year, meaning that constantly, awareness is raised in our borough about important aspects of Equality and Diversity. I attended an Interfaith meeting in Sheffield recently where two people commented on our Faith and World Views in the Community event held on Wed 10th December and how much they had enjoyed it. This means that our endeavours are being noted and appreciated. I am particularly pleased that we have been able to work with younger people this year — we have been supported at our events by the students and staff from Chesterfield College. This is encouraging and I would like to see Secondary Schools getting involved as well. There is still much to be done and we rely on your continuing support to make this possible.

- 2.2** A key aim within the Forum's action plan is to raise awareness of equalities and issues affecting local people. The Forum now has 187 members who receive regular information about the meetings, events and equalities news. Some of the participants represent a community group, or statutory organisation, while others are there as individuals from the community with an interest in promotion of equality and diversity.
- 2.3** This year, we talked to some of our members about the value of the Equality and Diversity Forum – here are some of the things they had to say:

- *Making a difference – eg. Inputting into EIAs and policies, making constructive comments and suggestions – A-boards, corporate branding etc. Supporting each other – disseminating information and networking.*
- *Great value for money! Very different from the Forum in its previous form (5 years+ ago), but the new approach to smaller, themed events means that we cover more equality issues, can respond to local issues, and spread events throughout the year.*
- *Networking between groups, inputting into policies, and events, particularly Holocaust Memorial Day.*
- *Partnership working, making new contacts, welcoming friendly atmosphere, welcoming new ideas, issues and events.*
- *Awareness of community matters, opportunity to promote and learn about organisations, talking to other organisations face to face and identifying solutions to overcome the problems that diverse groups face. Also improving services and organisational working practices by being more inclusive. Keeping up to date about organisations and what they do.*
- *Enables diverse groups to have a voice and access support they may need.*
- *A big benefit of the Equality and Diversity Forum is the interchange of ideas and information between people working towards supporting our community.*
- *The highlight of 2014/15 for me was the 'Faiths in our Community' event which I found particularly interesting and wish could be shared with a wider audience to help spread understanding and compassion.*

2.4 Equality and Diversity Forum Events and activities

During 2014/2015 the Equality and Diversity Forum have continued to organise and host a number of events throughout the year on a range of equality themes that are relevant to the community.

The themes for this year's events were chosen by Forum participants during a workshop where we discussed issues that are relevant to our local community. We continued to work on these events in partnership with a number of partner organisations to maximise the impact we can all make in the community and to pool our limited resources. Because of the increasing popularity of the Equality and Diversity Forum events, and the number that are held throughout the year, we also established an event planning working group as a sub-group of the forum, to coordinate the events. We would like to thank all those who have given up their time to support and help plan the following events that have taken place over the past year.

2.5 *International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO)*

Since 2005, May 17 has been dedicated to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, marking the day in 1990 when the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.



During the week leading up to IDAHO day (17th May 2014), we hosted an exhibition in the Town Hall. With permission from Transcend (Derby's Transgender Support Group) the exhibition included the 'Living My Life Exhibition' which celebrates the lives of local trans

people in Derbyshire. The exhibition, created by local people, aims to provide information and guidance to anyone who identifies as a trans person or who thinks that they may be trans. It also signposts people to other sources of support and information. It includes photos, information and testimonials from people about their lives and experiences.

Alongside this, we exhibited poetry written by young members of Chesterfield's Write Here group who worked with writer River Wolton, a former Derbyshire Poet Laureate, and members from Sheffield, Chesterfield and Derby LGBT groups worked with writer Sarah Thomasin. They explored the stories and experiences about the persecution of LGBT people in the holocaust and the continuing persecution in today's world.

On IDAHO day, partners and colleagues, including the Council's leader and Chief Executive met at the Town Hall to demonstrate support, and this is captured in the photo above. The rainbow wrist bands and lanyards were kindly provided by Unison.



Left: Part of the 'Living my Life' Exhibition booklet which was produced by the Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in partnership with TransBareAll as part of the Pacesetters programme to reduce health inequalities.

2.6 ***Our History, Our Story – Polish Heritage Event***

This was another exhibition and event organised in partnership between the Equality and Diversity Forum, Links CVS and Signpost to Polish Success. The purpose of the event and exhibition was to promote understanding of Polish heritage in the local area. It was felt by the Equality and Diversity Forum that this is a particularly important message to share in the community during the current media portrayal of immigration.

The exhibition which was coordinated by Signpost to Polish Success and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund was shown in Chesterfield market hall for two weeks during September 2014, and included photographs, personal stories in video and audio, and memorabilia capturing the memories and experiences of Polish migrants who settled in Chesterfield and the surrounding areas after the second world war.

Following the two week exhibition, the Forum hosted a public event at the



Town Hall, where four members of the local Polish migrant community shared their experiences of leaving Poland and settling and integrating into the

Above: Sharing stories and memories

local community in Derbyshire.

Although a small event, there was much interest from the local Polish community, many of whom brought their own personal stories and family photos and made connections with others at the event. The event was publicised in the Derbyshire Times, and Radio Sheffield also attended recording interviews with people present which were later broadcast in their drive time show.

Right: Our History Our Story event at the Town Hall on 2nd October 2014.



Feedback on the 'Our History, Our Story' event.

- *A good opportunity to hear oral history from local Polish families*
- *A forum for people to be heard individually*
- *Fascinating insight*
- *Good to meet other local people from Polish heritage*
- *I've learnt lots about the Polish community here*

100% of the feedback from attendees was positive in terms of the event in general and the usefulness in raising awareness of local Polish heritage.

2.7 Faiths and World Views in our Community

Another theme that the Equality and Diversity Forum felt was important this year was promoting understanding of the religious diversity in the local area. Around 80 people (including a group of Chesterfield College students) attended this event which included a keynote speech by Dr Phil Henry from the Multifaith Centre, about the importance of inter-faith working, and the local context of religion. This was followed by a series of 'speed dating' workshops led by local people from seven different faiths and/or world views including: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Humanism,

and Sikhism. The workshop leaders were volunteers from the local community.

People who came to the event were split into groups and attended all seven of the speed dating workshops which provided an insight into the day-to-day aspects of living each faith or world view and an opportunity to pose questions to the workshop leader. (Basic introductions to each of the faiths or world views were included in the delegate pack so the focus of the workshops could be on the more 'everyday' aspects of each faith or world view.)

The workshops were particularly well received, with many people commenting that they'd have liked to extend the event and have more time to learn about each other's faiths and beliefs first-hand.



Above: College students also took part in the Faiths and World Views workshops.

We asked people who attended to score their understanding of different faiths and world views out of ten (one = poor, ten = excellent) before and after the event. Around 30 people who attended completed the feedback form and this is what they said:

How would you score your understanding of different faiths and world views?											
Score		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Before event	No. of people	1	4	6	3	4	4	6	0	0	1
	%	3%	14%	21%	10%	14%	14%	21%	0%	0%	3%
After event	No. of people	0	0	0	0	2	5	8	9	4	1
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	17%	28%	31%	14%	3%

Everyone who completed a feedback form said that their understanding had improved:

Improvement in understanding of different religions and world views as a result of the event		
Increase	No. of people	Percentage of people
+1	3	10%
+2	10	34%
+3	6	21%
+4	5	17%
+5	4	14%
+6	1	3%

2.8 Holocaust Memorial Day

Over the past three years, the Equality and Diversity Forum has worked in partnership with local organisations to mark Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) with an open event. This year, the HMD event was funded by the Equality and Diversity Forum and hosted by Chesterfield College

The event included two short stories from Shonaleigh Cumbers who is a local Drut’syla (traditionally trained Yiddish storyteller). This was followed by a keynote speech by Mr. Bernard Grunberg (age 92). Mr Grunberg, a German Jew, arrived in the UK at the age of 15 through the Kindertransport scheme which enabled a group of young Jewish Refugees to come to England. Now settled in Derby, Mr Grunberg tells his own and his family’s story to promote tolerance between communities.



Bernard Grunberg speaking at the Forum’s Holocaust Memorial Day event

At the end of the event, attendees were asked to write pledges to ‘keep the memory alive’ and hang them on a tree which was displayed in the college for the week following the event.

Around 130 people attended the event (around half of which were students), and for the first time, the event was so popular that we had to turn some people away.



Above left: Mr Grunberg and a group of college students add their pledges to the tree at the HMD event in Chesterfield.
Above right: Attendees at the event.

Sarah Roy from Derbyshire Law Centre comments on the value of working in partnership to deliver events like Holocaust Memorial Day.

Derbyshire Law Centre has been working in partnership to deliver an event to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day for the last four years and these events are now a priority in our calendar each year. Working with Chesterfield Borough Council, the Police, Chesterfield College and other statutory and voluntary sector agencies to mark something so historically significant is a great way to bring agencies together on common ground and make a real difference in our community. We all bring something different to the table, whether it is funding, premises, public speaking skills, resources or simply ideas that give the day a different focus and direction every time. We plan to continue our involvement and look forward to working with partners old and new and hopefully build better and bigger events in the future for the people of Chesterfield.

Sarah Roy, Derbyshire Law Centre

3. PROMOTING EQUALITY THROUGH OUR SERVICES

Throughout the year, a range of activities and developments take place in the Council's services which contribute towards our commitment to embrace diversity and treat everyone fairly.

3.1 Customer services

The Council's Customer Services has retained its accreditation against the Customer Service Excellence standards. The introduction of the Welfare Reform Act in April 2013 placed a great deal of pressure on Customer Services, through increased customer contact and more complex enquiries from the public. This meant that retaining the accreditation would be more challenging. The requirement was to not only to continue to deliver good customer service but to also show improvement.

The Customer Service Excellence standards consist of 5 key areas:

- Customer Insight
- The Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

Through our case studies and evidence, we were able to demonstrate that there had been a high standard and overall improvement in the customer service delivery over the five areas, and a commitment to continual improvement providing a quality customer service to our customers.

The Council has also refreshed its Discretionary Housing Payments Policy in 2014 in response to Welfare Reform and to incorporate Universal Credit, particularly the 'bedroom tax'. The aim of the policy is to use the funding available to relieve financial hardship associated with paying housing costs to ensure that we are able to use our discretion to assist some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Employees in Revenues, Customer Service, and Housing are now able to ensure that each claim is considered individually and claimants are given all of the support they need to access the scheme. Examples of the type of cases where discretion could be used where penalties for under-occupancy would otherwise apply include:

- Where a couple/family has a spare room but is expecting a baby
- Where children are temporarily in care
- Where there is a spare room but it would be unreasonable to move due to substantial disabled adaptations or vital medical equipment being stored, for example dialysis or oxygen equipment
- Couples sleeping in separate rooms due to disabilities or moderate adaptations
- Where there is a spare bedroom, but it would be unreasonable to move due to disability, closeness to family support
- For a young person aged under 25 with a history of homelessness who is now settled

3.2 Community Assemblies and Community Development

The Community Assemblies continue to be a success, enabling two-way communication with a range of people from our communities. The Community Assemblies have continued their grant system over the past year, awarding minor grants and larger amounts to a range of local groups, many of which contribute towards promoting equality and diversity in the community. Here are just a few of the projects supported by the funding

that have helped to promote equality and celebrate diversity in the community:

- A mini bus hire for trip around Derbyshire countryside for the Chinese Elders' Group
- Transporting Centrepont service users to meetings (older people's day care)
- Education and cultural trips for members of the African Caribbean Community Association to reduce isolation, vulnerability and loneliness
- Age Concern Federation of Positive Ageing event in Chesterfield (to bring older people's groups together)
- Transporting Everybody Hurts service users to meetings (help and support for people affected by child to parent abuse)
- Young people's dance project organised by the Asian Association
- Rethink Mash theatre trip and ten pin bowling event to support mental wellbeing
- TRUSTTinnitus group meetings/counselling service and general publicity of the project
- Sporting Futures multi-sport and diversionary activities around Newbold School
- Benches for Spital cemetery as part of centenary commemorations of the First World War

The financial inclusion partnership project, "Health, Wealth and Wellbeing", continues to be a success. A number of Chesterfield Borough Council services have continued to work with Derbyshire County Council Public Health and partner agencies to begin rolling out an exciting new financial inclusion project following a successful pilot in Poolsbrook – this involved Affordable Warmth, Credit Union, Citizens Advice Bureau, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre, Health Trainer and Job Centre Plus. The Financial Inclusion, health, wealth and wellbeing projects are now to be rolled out in Holme Hall, Grangewood, St Helens/Stonegravels and Middlecroft.

3.3 Other Grant Funding

In appreciation of the work being done by local community organisations, the Council decided to maintain the level of grant funding from the previous year for 2014-2015 to ensure continued quality of provision at a time of unprecedented demand for the services of these organisations. Chesterfield Borough Council awarded £276,160 of funding to organisations through Service Level Agreements (Links CVS, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau, Derbyshire Law Centre, and Shopmobility).

The Community Assemblies now also offer grant schemes for local organisations.

3.4 Work for Yourself Programme

The Work for Yourself project has continued through funding from European Regional Development Fund, Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council. The project aims to get young people and adults with disabilities that are currently not in employment within Chesterfield and Bolsover Districts to consider self employment as an option. The project ends at the end of June 2015, and we are about to commission an independent evaluation of the project. Focus will now be on how the support of the programme can be extended beyond the lifetime of the current ERDF programme. Commissioning an independent evaluation is one of the stages in this process.

To date, over the lifetime of the project, 559 individuals have been referred to the project, of which 363 were considered to be eligible for support. The team has worked with 321 of these to date and over 65 businesses have been launched. Of these businesses, so far, 27 have been running for more than 12 months. Also, 42 (full time equivalent) jobs have been created.

Quotes from businesses established as a result of the programme

“I found the programme very useful and my business adviser has helped me tremendously. I feel very independent and happy now that I am set up in business”.

“Without the support from the WFY programme and my business adviser I wouldn't have had the confidence to move forwards with my business. The workshops provided by the programme were very helpful and interesting”

3.5 Queen's Park Sports Centre

In acknowledgment of the impact that participation in sport and physical activity has in tackling health inequalities, the Council is currently building a modern sports centre to replace Queen's Park Sports Centre. The scheme, which is being delivered in partnership with Chesterfield College, will provide an improved customer experience, with greater facilities. Work began on site in September 2014, and is progressing well and the new centre is due to open in January 2016.

The Council has also received £2 million in funding from Sport England towards the new Queen's Park Sports Centre. The investment has enabled us to expand plans and provide additional activity space, including:

- Increasing the main swimming pool from six to eight lanes
- Increasing the size of the learner pool
- Increasing the number of sports courts from six to eight
- Additional studio space on the first floor of the building.
- Spectator seating in the swimming pool hall and main sports hall.

This is in addition to the previously planned facilities, which include:

- A learner pool with moveable floor and children's fun water features
- Café and social space
- Midwifery centre
- Village changing facilities with individual and family cubicles for swimmers
- Changing facilities for other sports or activities
- Three training rooms
- Additional activity studio
- 80 station gym
- Two glass back squash courts with moveable wall
- Car parking for approximately 150 cars.

3.6 Sport and leisure in the community

Over the past year, we have continued a strong programme of activities and services to expand our community outreach sport and physical activity programme and further develop arrangements with partners. Highlights include:

- The Active Chesterfield Partnership has been meeting regularly to work on joint projects to improve participation in sport and physical activity in Chesterfield, with a specific focus on areas of greater deprivation
- The first Active Chesterfield Sports Award event was successfully held in December 2014, with awards being given to local sports people and coaches in Chesterfield. This will continue as an annual event, with the next one being done in collaboration with the School Sports Partnership.
- Project funding for the Pregnancy and Early Years project has continued and the programme has been expanded with many new activities for pregnant women and their young families, such as mother and baby yoga classes and dance classes for babies and young children.
- Working with Chesterfield Swimming Club under the banner of Swim Chesterfield we have realigned our swimming lessons to facilitate

greater transition from our 'learn to swim' lessons programme up to club level.

- We now also have an expanded programme of holiday activities at Queen's Park Sports Centre which runs every school holiday.
- The Wheels for All inclusive cycling sessions continue to run at Queen's Park Sports Centre in partnership with Wheely Fun Wheels.
- Within our sports facilities, programmes have been successfully reviewed with the introduction of new classes such as Armageddon Fitness, introductory group fitness classes and a greater range of classes for pregnant women.
- Health and Fitness Memberships have risen to over 4,500 across Queen's Park Sports Centre and the Healthy Living Centre – record numbers for the centres.

3.7 Parks and Open Spaces

Over the last year, we have updated the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the purpose of which is to direct and prioritise resources to gain maximum benefits for all of our communities through the provision of quality, accessible green space. Our vision for parks and open spaces in Chesterfield Borough is to ensure that Chesterfield has an accessible network of high quality parks and open spaces which puts good health and an excellent quality of life within reach of everyone who lives in and visits Chesterfield.

The strategy is primarily concerned with the management and development of publicly accessible green space within the Borough of Chesterfield that has recreational value. It includes:

- Parks and public gardens
- Natural or semi-natural green space
- Amenity green space
- Provision for children and young people
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Green corridors including the canal
- Closed churchyards

We have also continued to improve specific green spaces within the Borough, for example, working with the Friends of Inkerman Playing Fields, the Council secured a grant of £25,000 from Biffaward to install a new footpath across the park to make the park and areas adjacent to it more accessible to local people. The new footpath will improve access to the park particularly in the winter months. Early feedback suggests that the new footpath has opened up the park to many children attending Ashgate Croft School and had also allowed the school to venture much further afield with the children.

3.8 **Housing**

During 2014/2015, our Housing Service had a number of key achievements in the promotion of equality, including:

- Refreshing our tenant engagement opportunities – including using the mobile office to go out into the community and speak to tenants.
- Achieving the target of 100% of our housing stock meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- Reviewing our homelessness prevention services to ensure that we are providing the best service possible
- Improving support and feedback for victims of Anti-social behaviour
- Progressing the development of a housing scheme for older people at Parkside
- Reducing the waiting time for major adaptations to be done to homes
- Reviewing our housing allocations policy to include a six month residency criteria (so Chesterfield residents are not competing with applicants who do not live in the Borough), and enabling the Council to match homeless households with vacant properties.
- Preventing or relieving homelessness for 624 households.
- Supporting 150 vulnerable tenants to manage their tenancies in addition to tenants that are already supported by the Tenancy Support Service.
- Using a tenant incentive scheme to give financial support to those affected by Housing Benefit changes, and an improved mutual exchange scheme to help match tenants wanting to swap to properties that do not incur penalties under welfare reform.
- Careline handling 163,900 calls over the year, including:

Required a response officer to visit out of hours	2298
Calls where the customer had fallen	1049
Required an ambulance	681
Required a doctor	598
Required the Fire Service	80
Required the Police	84

3.9 **Community Safety**

The Community Safety Partnership continues to deliver innovative programmes to tackle crime and disorder.

In March 2015, the Community Safety Partnership launched a new project called 'Park Guardians' which focuses on reducing anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in Queen's Park. The scheme encourages members of the public to report incidents and concerns to the Council or the Police so that agencies can then target resources at the most appropriate times

The Street Pastor project continues to utilise volunteers who engage with vulnerable people in the night time economy, providing support and reassurance at a time where individuals are often at their most vulnerable, and a place of safety when required.

The Council has also reviewed its Anti-Social Behaviour Policy to reflect the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act. This Act has given new powers to Local Authorities and its partners to prevent and mitigate issues relation to Anti-Social Behaviour.

Over the next year, we anticipate that a national ban on New Psychotic Substances (Legal Highs) will be implemented. Legal highs have become of increasing concern because of the detrimental effect on the young people of Chesterfield, and the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership will be amending current working practice to implement the new arrangements locally.

3.10 Updates to the Winding Wheel and Pomegranate

During last year, the Council received £495,000 of funding from the Arts Council England towards the refurbishment works to the Winding Wheel and the Pomegranate Theatre. These refurbishments are now complete, and include the following improvements to the Winding Wheel:

- Improvements to the auditorium, stage and backstage areas to allow the venue to attract more higher quality productions, following the success of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Blood Brothers in 2012
- Improvements to the main hall, allowing it to be used for more activities and studio performances
- Improving accessibility for artists with impaired mobility.

4. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

4.1 Corporate Equalities Training

We continue to deliver a Corporate Equality Induction to all new employees and Councillors, and an Equality Refresher Course to update the Council's existing employees about our equality values and the role they play in ensuring that the Council continues to promote equality in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We also deliver an Equality and

Feedback from training delegates

"Valuable & Interactive"

"Equalities was very good. Excellent Presentation, informative talk & fun activities"

"If everybody had delivered their slot in the same fashion as equalities, I would have probably remembered far more"

"Very informative – good pace of delivery"

Diversity training programme for volunteers at the Council and bespoke training for service areas as required. Employees that attend the Corporate Induction are asked to complete a course evaluation. During 2014/15, when asked how effective the induction is in ensuring Equality and Diversity is embedded within the Council services, 98% of attendees said that the Equality and Diversity Induction was 'good' (the top answer).

This year we also delivered a series of equalities refresher training sessions specifically tailored to our Venues employees (Winding Wheel and Pomegranate Theatre) to support them in providing a fair and accessible service to our customers.

4.2 *Project Academy*

We continue to run the successful Project Academy scheme which provides an opportunity for employees to be seconded to the Business Transformation Service for up to a year. During this time they are trained in project management, change management and Lean transformational techniques along with other skills. The training includes both formal training and 'on the job' experience of project management. Candidates are taken off their day job during the life of the secondment. At the end of the training programme the graduates return to their service area with a new set of skills and experience which can be applied to help deliver future projects. The scheme is helping to develop our workforce and future potential.

Since it was established in 2013, the Project Academy has delivered:

- More than £750,000 of capital savings
- More than £378,000 of annual revenue savings
- Supported the Great Place Great Service Programme
- Delivered more customer focused services
- Reduced inefficient working practices
- Given us a pool of in-house staff with the right skills to deliver key projects
- Motivated and engaged staff
- 9 officers seconded to the project academy of which 6 graduate officers have now moved on a secured new roles within CBC

4.3 *Mentoring*

Last year, we launched a new mentoring scheme giving our employees the opportunity to either be a mentor or a mentee. All participants received training from East Midlands Councils on how to get the most out of a mentoring programme. 20 people took part in the scheme, from a wide range of roles across the Council. The scheme has been particularly popular with female and younger employees.

4.4 *Springboard*

Chesterfield Borough Council employees have also participated in Springboard, a national women's personal development programme. The programme enables women to identify the clear, practical and realistic steps that they want to take to make a better world for themselves at work and home, whilst building the practical skills and confidence to take these steps. The programme focuses on the following areas:

- realistic self-assessment
- aspects of being a woman
- identifying priorities
- assertiveness skills
- setting practical yet stretching goals
- improving health
- stress management
- presenting a positive image
- improved communication skills
- building better relationships
- building networks

4.5 *Apprenticeships*

There are a number of employees currently undertaking an apprenticeship in a range of disciplines eg. Leisure management. In addition, one person is undertaking an Apprenticeship in Business Administration at the Innovation Centres, and nine people are undertaking Craft Apprenticeships based with the Housing Service.

4.6 *Pre-retirement Planning*

23 employees have completed the Planning a Positive Retirement course during the last year. This training supports people to build and plan to fund a new lifestyle, make the most of their money, and protect assets.

5. EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 5.1** The Equalities Framework for Local Government is a national equalities development and monitoring tool for all local authorities. It provides a method for Councils to monitor performance on equalities, and is based on striving for continuous improvement.
- 5.2** Having successfully reached the Achieving Level of the Equalities Framework in February 2011 following a Peer Challenge, the Council made a commitment to work towards the standards at the Excellent Level of the Equalities Framework.
- 5.3** During this year, we have made good progress towards reaching the Excellent Level. Having refreshed the self-assessment, we are confident that we now meet over 90% of the Excellent Level criteria. We are developing an

action plan to improve our work in promoting equality and to address any areas where we could improve our practices in order to meet the standards within the Excellent Level.

6. EQUALITY ACT 2010 UPDATE

- 6.1** The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010, bringing together all anti-discrimination legislation to harmonise and strengthen the law to support progress on equality.
- 6.2** On 5 April 2011 the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act) came into force in England, Scotland and Wales. The Duty requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.
- 6.3** Public bodies are required to publish information to show their compliance at least annually, and set and publish equality objectives at least every four years. Each year, the Council collates all of the information we hold about who is accessing our services, how satisfied people are with the services we provide, and information about our workforce in relation to equalities, and publishes it alongside our Equality Impact Assessments.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1** The Council is required to show that the relevant equality issues have been considered before changes are made to policies, projects, services, functions and strategies, or new ones are created. Chesterfield Borough Council does this through its robust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The EIA process enables us to look at our work in depth to see what impact it has on different equality groups, and to mitigate against any potentially negative impacts that are identified. Staff received training in the completion of EIAs ensuring that the process is embedded across all council services.
- 7.2** During 2014/15, the Council undertook around 30 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for a variety of changes to policies, strategies and projects. The EIAs were published with the relevant reports to the Council's Cabinet, and can be viewed in the equalities section of our website.
- 7.3** Through the EIA process, we have been able to address any negative impacts on sections of the community promote equality by identifying and

acting on opportunities to implement positive impacts for groups where possible.

8. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2015/2016

There is much to look forward to over the next year, as we continue to work with partners to promote equality and diversity in our community and within the organisation. Some of the key activities will include:

- refreshing the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy to ensure we continue to stretch ourselves as an organisation to do the best we can to promote equality and diversity
- continuing to facilitate and support Chesterfield's Equality and Diversity Forum to act as a 'critical friend' to the Council on matters that impact on equality for our employees and the community, and to work with partners to deliver a range of equalities events designed to raise awareness of local issues and celebrate diversity. These events during 2015/2016 are likely to include: dementia awareness, mental wellbeing promotion, and community cohesion (as part of Holocaust Memorial Day).
- opening the Council's new Queen's Park Sports Centre
- financial inclusion activities in partnership with a range of organisations around target areas in the Borough.
- launching the Chesterfield Theatres Access Group, which will work to improve accessibility of our shows and seek to find new and effective ways to enable attendance by the widest range of people. An Audio Description Booth will be introduced later this year, hopefully, in time for our Pantomime, where we will also be offering captioned, signed and a relaxed performance, with a longer term aim to make this part of our regular future programmes.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any comments on our Equalities Annual Report or would like to request further information or copies of any of the documents highlighted in the report please contact:

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