

# Fenland District Council Annual Equality Report 2020



# Fenland District Council - Annual Equality Report 2020

Are we accessible to you?

- We want everyone to be able to understand us;
- We want everyone to be able to read our written materials;
- We aim to provide you with what you need to read, speak and write to us.

On request we will provide this report in alternative formats and languages.

To make a request please telephone 01354- 654321 or e-mail [diversity@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@fenland.gov.uk) or [info@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:info@fenland.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Annual Equality and Diversity Annual update for 2019/20. This report highlights the work we have been doing over the last year to promote equality with our partners and the wider community.

Fenland District Council (the 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 treatment in all aspects of our work.

In the current climate, our work promoting equality is becoming more of a challenge but is also increasingly important – as you will see in this report, working with partners in the community is an essential part of how we do this. We are proud of our achievements over the last year, including our continued promotion of equalities and celebration of diversity.

The Fenland Diverse Communities Forum continues to promote equality and diversity within the district and with its communities, and has organised several activities, events and projects over the year on a range of locally relevant themes.

Producing this report has helped the Council identify the key issues affecting its service users and staff. This information will help the Council to inform the development of its services to make them as effective as possible for everyone. The emphasis on carrying out equality analysis for all policies, strategies, procedures and functions carried out by the Council means that we understand the impact of the decisions we make on people with different protected characteristics and therefore can plan services more effectively.

The Council is actively working towards fairness for all; that enables everyone to have equal life chances and to work free from discrimination in a society that values the diversity within our district.

We believe we are continuing to make a real difference to the quality of life of our residents, businesses and visitors despite COVID 19 by creating and maintaining a district in which each person has an equal entitlement to quality services and employment opportunities irrespective of their race, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status.

The Council values the strength that comes with difference, and the positive contribution that diversity brings to the district.

## 1. Who we are?

Fenland has strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. Over 101,400 people live in the district (ONS: 2018), which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of people live in our four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from around the country.

Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire and plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. By 2036, it is predicted that the population will have increased by 9% to 110,700 (ONS: 2018). We have plans in place to maximise the positive opportunities that growth and diversity brings.

### About Fenland

Our population is also getting older. 29% of our population are aged 60 or over; above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK (ONS: 2019). Alongside partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support they need to live happily, healthily and independently.

We also face some challenges around deprivation, particularly around education and health. Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.

As part of our on-going commitment, we are seeking to collect relevant equality information about our service users and our communities. This information helps us to understand if we are meeting service user needs and how we can improve the services we offer.

We can only provide an effective service to our community if we recognise and understand the diversity that exists within our community, enable our workforce to meet their needs and address any concerns of all our citizens.

To this end, during the financial year 2019/20, we have worked with partners and other researchers to get a better understanding of the makeup of people living in the area. The findings of this work are published in a report called Best Intentions: EU Migrant Workers in Fenland which is on the Councils internet. : [https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/17357/EU-migrant-workers-in-Fenland-September-2020-/pdf/EU\\_migrant\\_workers\\_in\\_Fenland\\_Sept\\_20.pdf?m=637423431835800000](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/17357/EU-migrant-workers-in-Fenland-September-2020-/pdf/EU_migrant_workers_in_Fenland_Sept_20.pdf?m=637423431835800000)

## 2. Context

Following last year's annual report on the progress of the ongoing equality work this report further updates our progress on the Strategic Equality Objectives and explores the work that is being done against the actions that sit underneath. The original report which this document updates sets out the legislation and duties that the Council must comply with. This information is available on the Council's website [www.fenland.gov.uk/equality](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/equality) .

Despite the highly challenging financial circumstances that the public sector is operating within, the Council has still been able to make real progress in many areas of its the Equality Objectives, often through partnership working, harnessing local adaptability and integrating its work to develop a coherent approach in delivering its priorities to the community of Fenland. The equality priorities that the Council have set, in recognising that there would be future broader impacts upon services and communities as a result of the current austerity measures have gone some way through the budget development process to limit these impacts although of course cannot fully eliminate them.

Alongside partners, we also continue to develop new ways of working. 2019/20 was the third year of the partnership 'Trailblazer' approach to homelessness prevention across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to help shape best practice across the country. Early intervention and multi-agency working have supported over 1,000 households, who would usually not qualify for help, to avoid becoming homeless.

We also successfully bid for funding from the DCLG Controlling Migration Fund. This is supporting us and the wider 'Diverse Communities Forum' partnership to successfully tackle migration issues affecting local people including homelessness, overcrowding, poor housing

conditions, modern day slavery, discrimination and street drinking. This work was recently shortlisted for a national award and best practice is being shared nationally, contributing to sector-led improvement

### **3. Our Approach to Equality**

Our organisational approach and objectives to equality is to ensure that it is mainstreamed into key business drivers, such as the budget setting process and our approach to customer services. Equality related considerations and actions are being mainstreamed into the relevant strategies and plans, which shape our organisational approach in each of these areas, thus ensuring equality is integral to our approach and is owned across our organisation.

As a council, we are committed to providing high quality services that are customer focused. These services will be accessible, sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of all individuals, families and communities.

The Councils cross-cutting corporate priorities are explained in more detail in the Councils Business Plan. To view our Annual Report, visit [www.fenland.gov.uk/annualreport](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/annualreport).

All outcomes are monitored by each service and we will use this data to better inform service planning and development, seeking to continually improve our performance over time.

### **4. The Council as an Employer**

The workforce equalities data is monitored regularly at the level included within this report. However, to ensure the Council's obligations under the Equality Act remain satisfied and equality is given full emphasis required a full and detailed equalities analysis is currently being undertaken. This will include all equality strands where the data is sufficiently robust and will span several people focussed activities, for example;

- Recruitment;
- Performance management, and;
- Employee relations.

The outcomes of the analysis will then appropriately feed into relevant workstreams to ensure equality of opportunity within the workplace which in turn will enable/ assist people to reach their maximum potential.

Equality monitoring information is stored on the Council's payroll and human resources information system. The information is requested at the recruitment stage and updated regularly.

The Council encourages all employees to provide this information and an equality monitoring survey is carried out on all employees at regular stages to increase the information held.

The monitoring of cases for grievances, disciplinary and dignity at work show no indication of discrimination involving any equality strand. Our relatively low level of grievances reflects our approach of resolving issues wherever possible, informally at local level before they escalate.

There are effective communication and consultation mechanisms in place at all levels within the Council to ensure that the workforce is fully consulted on and informed about any issues that could concern them. The processes employed within the Council to ensure the effective and ongoing communication between Corporate Management Team, managers, employees and trade union representatives are detailed below. Any issues regarding restructures, substantial changes to roles, as well as any new initiatives/legislation affecting the function of a service are clearly communicated and consulted upon from inception with all appropriate groups. A report is then made to the Council's Staff Committee to consider and if agreed are then implemented.

Consultation at service level is characterised by joint consultation with all staff on any service level operational issues, which are conducted on an informal and regular basis; often taking

place as part of regular individual, team and/or service meetings along with service plan development workshops.

Consultation at an organisational level occurs at regular scheduled Management, Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) meetings. This group is comprised of management, trade union and staff elected representatives. These meetings cover consultation on corporate and strategic issues, as well as any staff and/ or service level issues that may need to be discussed. They are held generally on a monthly basis (or more frequently if specific meetings are needed).

This framework facilitates the information and consultation process at all levels with the workforce and trade unions and is so structured and designed to provide an inclusive and consistent approach throughout the Council. Whilst structure is important, it is recognised that there will, at times, be a need for flexibility in approach, and this should be discussed and jointly agreed in each case.

The Council also works to Core Competencies which cover:

- Customer Focus
- Effective Communications
- Teamwork and Co-operation
- Respect & Dignity for all
- Leading, Managing and Responding to Change

As well as Management competencies:

- Coaching and Developing People.
- Effective Leadership.
- Managing People.
- Managing Performance.
- Strategic Awareness.

These competencies link to the Council's Core Values which are:

- Value, Respect and Dignity for all.
- Adopt a positive ONE TEAM approach.
- Listen, talk and take action.
- Understand, learn and improve.
- Encourage and Support.
- Service Excellence.

All staff and members of the Council are aware of what is expected from them as either Council employees or those representing the Council. To enhance and reinforce their understanding of this the Council has an Employee Handbook. This has been promoted widely and is available on the intranet.

## **5. Staff Groups**

The Council has an **Equality Service Champions Group**. This group provides a place for staff working on equality issues within their own service to gain support, share information, and good practice and promote equality and diversity awareness.

The Council places a strong emphasis on equality analysis. When developing policies and making decisions, the Council will make sure that those making the decisions know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can't then we should think carefully about whether we need to make the change to achieve a legitimate aim.

Where an impact assessment has been carried out its findings is feed into any subsequent committee/ cabinet reports. This ensures that elected members are fully aware when considering a report of any equality issues and/ or any negative and/ or cumulative effects on any of the protected characteristics to better inform the decision-making process.

These assessments are completed by Equality Service Champions. They help drive through the implementation of the Council's equality commitment and monitor service delivery outcomes within their service area. Guidance, support and advice are offered to those who may need assistance during the process. They are people from within the Council who represent each service team.

The Group is coordinated by the Council's Diversity Manager who coaches and mentor's equality champions to enable them to undertake their roles.

This group is long established and meets on a regular basis. It also provides a pool of expertise and experience to develop Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments and review policies and projects with regards to equality analysis/ issues. An example of this groups work is given later in this report.

## **6. Staff Self – Service**

We have encouraged employees to update their personal profiles and update their records via our self-service HR database– including updating their equalities information. We hope this will help us provide more accurate data and analysis on existing staff to inform our workforce analysis.

To enable and assist staff they have access to software that helps them to both read and write. It helps everyone in the workplace to process on- screen information in their preferred style including; speak aloud, dyslexic spell checkers, on screen highlighters, mind maps, screen tints and offers many more tools to improve accuracy and productivity.

## **7. Equality & Diversity training**

The Council offers all staff and members the opportunity to refresh and update their equalities knowledge and skill set via training courses.

A comprehensive training programme for customer facing staff is run annually and is open to anyone within the Council to attend. More bespoke equality and diversity courses can be run at any time to meet the identified needs of individual teams or services.

This training approach enables staff to understand the general Equality Duty and thus be conscious of their duties and obligations, and to help them develop a comprehensive approach to meet these duties.

## **8. Raising and Maintaining Awareness**

It is important that staff and elected members are aware of the general equality duty and how to comply with this so that this is considered in our work. To enable this, we ensure that we offer appropriate information and use a combination of methods to build and maintain awareness including:

- Briefings for elected members;
- Briefings for Corporate Management Team;
- Information to key contacts within the Council;
- Items and updates in our staff briefings
- Inclusion with Overview & Scrutiny reviews.

Equality issues are an item that is regularly discussed at team meetings within a range of service areas within the Council, which ensures that it remains a live issue. It is also reinforced through the work that is undertaken as part of Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

## **9. Elected Members:**

Elected members benefit from equalities training. These sessions highlight key equalities and human rights legislation, the diversity of the district and the actions that individuals and the Council can do to promote integration and cohesion.



Training is focused on the role elected members have, and how to ensure that equalities matters are considered when making any decision.

## **10. Diverse Communities Forum (DCF)**

Poor cohesion has created a variety of complex challenges impacting the quality of life, for different reasons, across many communities. These include:

- **DCF** created and established to work on initiative work to support integration and cohesion
- **Negative perception**, particularly that migrants 'take' jobs from local people.
- **Language barriers** affecting communication and access of local services
- **Housing problems**. Some unscrupulous landlords offer sub-standard accommodation in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). High rent, overcrowding, unsafe living conditions and illegal eviction often leads to rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour
- **Poor educational outcomes**, impacted by accommodation standards and parental language barriers
- **Vulnerability to exploitation**. Gangmasters lure people to the country with false promises, leading to problems relating to control, coercion and modern-day slavery
- **Health problems** caused by sub-standard housing or excessive alcohol consumption.
- **A culture of mistrust** preventing people from accessing help they are entitled to and reporting mistreatment.

However, the DCF is making excellent progress in tackling these issues which is improving the town for both current and future communities.

The Council, in conjunction with other public, faith, community and voluntary sector partners from the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum meet bi- annually. These events form part of our consultation process for establishing the equality objectives for the year ahead; update all on progress against our Fenland-wide cohesion action plan to discuss the challenges and benefits of providing public, community and voluntary services in the district.

The partnership action plan is driven, and performance monitored through a core group of the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum and primarily focuses on community outcomes.

## **11. What's Breaking**

What's Breaking is the Council's information and alert mechanism for all staff engagement which is one method the Council employs to communicate with our staff.

It is an inclusive mechanism to communicate and disseminate information, news and updates to all areas of the workforce, and compliments other established communication mechanisms, such as staff 1-2-1's and team meetings, staff briefings, notice boards, e-mail, newsletters, policies and procedures, briefing notes, training courses and FAQs, intranet and internet. Staff who do not have access to email and the intranet receive printed versions via their manager.

## **12. Staff Sessions (Called Horse's Mouth briefings)**

These are information sessions delivered to all staff at each Council office, Leisure and Business centre at varying times by the Chief Executive on a regular basis. These sessions include a great deal of information, including:

- Council Achievements;
- Council Priorities;
- Forthcoming Challenges;
- Budget Information;
- Workforce updates;
- Open forum and Q & A sessions.

There is also the opportunity for staff to submit questions/comments in advance that they would like a response to. Alternatively, they can submit questions afterwards on anything that was raised or prompted, and these will be responded to.

### **13. Staff Survey**

Staff surveys were developed and embedded as an additional method to capture and measure what is important to our staff, namely:

- the frequency and level of communication they receive;
- their ability to raise issues with their manager;
- if they get a chance to develop their skills;
- how they contribute to the service plan and corporate business plan;
- If they get feedback from their manager.

It is an electronic survey which is sent to each employee, which will consist of a set of questions drawn from the Council's annual appraisal process, (called Springboard) Investors in People standards, and the Customer Service Excellence criteria.

The survey also seeks to capture additional equality information from individuals (E.g. gender, age, ethnicity, length of employment, part- or full- time status, location etc.).

All survey responses and findings also provide supporting evidence for both Investors in People and Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

All staff were invited to take part in the 2020 Staff Survey by either completing the survey online or by completing a paper copy if required.

The response rate for this year was a very encouraging 59%, an increase of 19% since 2018. (This equates to 209 members of staff completing the survey).

The survey asked questions under the following categories;

- Contribution
- Communication
- Working relationships
- Personal Development
- Suggestions

The survey had several yes/no or multiple-choice questions, and the table below provides a comparison to our previous surveys.

For almost all areas we have seen an improvement, with only the question on internet accessibility seeing a decrease. Since 2018's Staff Survey we have also seen notable improvements in satisfaction rates on Springboard discussions, training needs and feelings of being trusted within a team, which indicates that improvements introduced over the past 2 years have been successful.

This year again, the survey asked staff to identify three things that they felt would improve the quality of life at Fenland District Council, with a free text format provided staff to respond and to submit any other comments they might wish.

Once again, we received many comments, with several consistent messages and themes from across the Council; such as:

- Flexibility to be able to work from home;
- Improving management effectiveness and leadership;
- Further improving our ICT and Communications platforms; and
- Building on the One Team culture

All comments have been reviewed and an action plan developed which we will update progress on in next year's report.

There are still some areas that we want to continue to develop and improve, but we should all be pleased and proud of this response, which reflects on how we all feel about working at Fenland.

### Summary of Staff Survey 2020

		2005	2006	2009	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
<b>How people feel about working for Fenland District Council?</b>									
1	I am proud to work for Fenland District Council	78%	83%	91%	84%	83%	82%	84%	95%
2	I am proud to work for Local Government	81%	86%	98%	84%	86%	81%	89%	98%
3	I feel committed to my work here at Fenland District Council					93%	88%	93%	99%
<b>Contribution</b>									
1	I am able to achieve a sense of job satisfaction in my work	72%	84%	91%	82%	79%	70%	79%	93%
2	I am clear on what my team/service area is trying to achieve	83%	88%	91%	85%	88%	76%	83%	95%
3	I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	84%	88%	91%	87%	86%	75%	87%	94%
4	I feel I do make a positive contribution to the success of the council	79%	83%	95%	92%	91%	87%	90%	98%
5	I am aware of the council's priorities	86%	91%	97%	90%	86%	88%	88%	95%
<b>Communication</b>									
1	I receive the right amount and type of communication	54%	66%	80%	73%	72%	67%	75%	83%
2	The communication I receive is relevant to my job	N/A	N/A	85%	80	75%	76%	82%	87%
3	I am well informed of changes that affect me or my team	56%	67%	71%	70	65%	59%	64%	78%
4	Team talks/meetings are effective and useful	73%	73%	81%	76	71%	73%	81%	82%
6	I get regular 1-2-1's with my line manager/supervisor	N/A	N/A	97%	71%	77%	77%	80%	85%
<b>Working Relationships</b>									
1	I feel that I am a trusted member of the team	89%	90%	95%	90%	91%	92%	79%	94%
2	I work well with my immediate supervisor or manager	88%	94%	92%	91%	91%	96%	94%	97%
3	My immediate manager encourages me to work well	84%	86%	90%	80%	81%	85%	85%	93%
4	My immediate manager gives me helpful feedback on my performance	73%	76%	84%	74%	76%	78%	85%	90%
5	If I had a problem concerning my immediate manager, I am confident that it would be addressed seriously	69%	72%	80%	74%	71%	74%	84%	88%
6	I feel that I have a good relationship with my senior manager	76%	75%	80%	81%	84%	81%	79%	83%
7	I am treated in a fair and respectful manner at work	82%	84%	92%	86%	90%	91%	89%	95%
8	The people I work with all pull together as part of a team	77%	84%	88%	81%	77%	84%	86%	89%
9	I feel I can achieve a balance between my work and home life	80%	80%	86%	84%	82%	80%	86%	92%
10	My line manager asks my opinion on matters and I have the opportunity to influence decisions	N/A	N/A	85%	73%	70%	71%	73%	79%
11	I feel my line manager is open and	87%	88%	91%	86%	85%			

	approachable						90%	87%	94%
12	I feel that senior management are open and approachable	62%	66%	76%	86%	70%	66%	71%	80%
<b>My Development</b>									
1	I have had an annual Springboard or Appraisal discussion in the last 12 months	89%	84%	96%	73%	83%	91%	73%	89%
2	My Springboard discussion was a positive experience	76%	77%	75%	88%	85%	81%	71%	87%
3	The development I have received enables me to do my job	70%	77%	84%	86%	81%	68%	76%	87%
4	I discuss training needs with my immediate manager	91%	92%	88%	83%	84%	88%	83%	89%
5	I have had an opportunity to discuss my career and development aspirations with my immediate manager	75%	80%	88%	75%	75%	74%	71%	79%
<b>General</b>									
new	My working arrangements have changed as a result of the coronavirus situation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	82%
new	If yes, I would like my new working arrangements to continue if possible	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	76%
1	I find my working environment pleasant and agreeable	61%	80%	81%	79%	74%	77%	82%	86%
2	I have fair and open access to opportunities	N/A	N/A	96%	78%	81%	81%	80%	90%
3	I have access to email at work	82%	87%	97%	91%	99%	97%	95%	84%
4	Do you know what action to take if you were subject of victimisation or discrimination in the workplace	N/A	N/A	99%	92%	92%	90%	93%	93%

Of course, there are still some areas that we want to continue to develop and improve, but we should all be pleased and proud of this response, which reflects on how we all feel about working here at Fenland.

#### 14 Gender Pay and Occupational Segregation Information

Gender Pay Gap legislation (developed by the Government Equalities Office) introduced in April 2017 requires all employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap for workers in scope as of 31 March 2019.

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women. As a concept it is different from “equal pay” which deals with any pay difference between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or jobs of equal value.

The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men’s earnings. For example, a 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% less per hour, on average, than men. Conversely, a negative 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% more, on average, than men.

Fenland District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees and has a clear procedure to ensure employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex or any other protected characteristic.

### What do we report on?

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees
Mean bonus pay gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees
Median bonus pay gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees
Bonus proportions	The proportions of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands

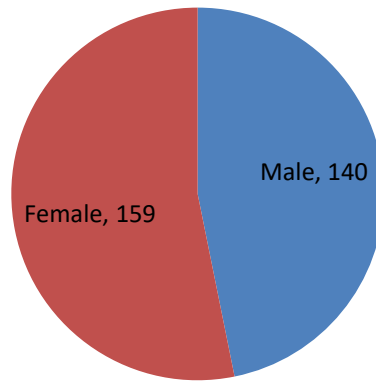
Overall the gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the median (actual midpoint) basic pay of men and women expressed as a percentage of the median basic pay of men:

$$\text{Gender pay gap} = \frac{\text{Median pay men} - \text{Median pay women}}{\text{Median pay men}} \times 100$$

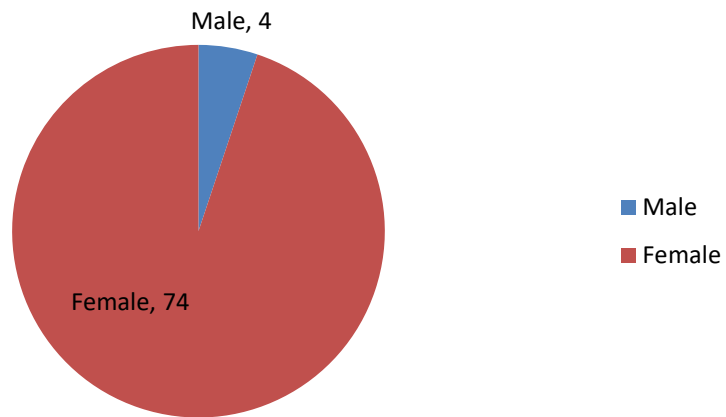
### Workforce Profile

There were 356 employees (headcount) working on the snapshot date of January 2020.

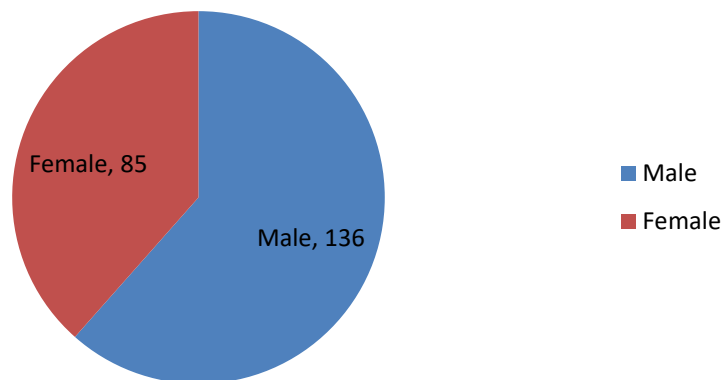
## Employee Distribution



## Part Time (<37 hours per week)



## Full Time



Average weekly hours worked:



30.71 Hours



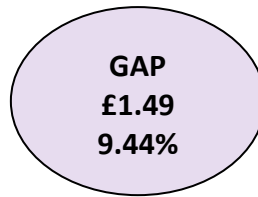
36.64 Hours

## Results – 31 March 2019

**Mean:** Average hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference:



£14.30 per hour



£15.79 per hour

**Mean Pay Gap – 9.44% (Previously 10.9%)**

### Summary:

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2017, the Gender Pay Gap nationally was 18.4%. Specifically, for 'Local government administrative occupations' there was a 15.9% Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap fell from 2017 to 2018 and the gap among all employees is now 9.44%, driven by more women working in part-time jobs, which are lower paid (an average hourly rate is £14.30 compared with £15.79, excluding overtime, for full-time jobs).

**Median:** Middle hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference between:



£12.36 per hour



£12.36 per hour

## Median Pay Gap – 0% (previously -9%)

### Pay Quartiles

Quartiles	Female	Male
Proportion of employees in the <b>lower quartile</b> pay band	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>
Proportion of employees in the <b>lower middle quartile</b> pay band	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Proportion of employees in the <b>upper middle quartile</b> pay band	<b>64%</b>	<b>36%</b>
Proportion of employees in the <b>top quartile</b> pay band	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>

### Bonus Pay Gap

Fenland District Council does not operate any performance related pay or bonus scheme and therefore has no bonus gender pay gap.

## Bonus Gap – 0%

### Analysis of Data

Currently there is no published information to define what level of pay gap is regarded as a cause for concern, the gender pay gaps identified are relatively small, and continue to be less than the statistics reported by the ONS (shown above).

With a mean gender pay gap of 9.44%, this would suggest that ranges of pay are spread fairly equally but the average pay for men remains higher.

The results are also likely to be due to workforce distribution across the pay bands and length of service amongst the male employees. A reason could be that there are a higher proportion of operational staff that are male that are working full time within the organisation.

Fenland District Council has well established Job Evaluation schemes in place and has undertaken a comprehensive review of pay and allowances to ensure there is no disparity. The most recent changes were in April 2019, when we carried out an equal pay audit and as a result, amended our pay band structures accordingly for all NJC salary bands.

Fenland District Council is therefore confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work. Rather its gender pay



gap is the result of the roles in which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries that these roles attract.

Across the UK economy as a whole, men are more likely than women to be in senior roles (especially very senior roles at the top of organisations), while women are more likely than men to be in the front-line roles at the lower end of the organisation. In addition, men are more likely to be in technical and IT-related roles, which attract higher rates of pay than other roles at a similar level.

Women are also more likely than men to have had breaks from work that have affected their career progression, for example to bring up children. They are also more likely to work part time. It remains the case that more women than men work part time because most caring responsibilities within the home are still taken on by women.

This pattern from the UK economy as a whole is reflected in the make-up of Fenland District Council's workforce, where the majority of front-line customer services staff are women, while the majority of operational roles are held by full time men.

The vast majority of organisations have a gender pay gap, and we are pleased to be able to say Fenland District Council's gap compares favourably with that of other organisations, including those within our sector, see below.

The mean gender pay gap for the whole economy (according to the October 2018 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings figures) is between 17.0% and 18.5%. At 9.44% for Fenland District Council's mean gender pay gap is, therefore, significantly lower than both that for the whole economy and that for our sector (based on 2017 figures).

## **Summary**

While women's general hourly rate is 9.44% lower than men, this is not as a result of paying men more than women for the same or equivalent work. Fenland District Council staff are paid the same for the same job, but the gender pay gap exists due to our workforce profile.

Fenland District Council's third annual Gender Pay Gap analysis does not identify any particular areas of concern.

To ensure that the jobs employees undertake are of equal value, in setting the pay levels Fenland District Council undertakes job evaluation to determine the size of a job by following the nationally recognised job evaluation scheme for National Joint Council employees. Evaluations are undertaken regularly for new jobs and also as part of restructures where a job significantly changes.

Flexible working is offered throughout the council for all levels of jobs unless business need means that it is not possible i.e. the use of flexi-time for some frontline employees will be limited in order to maintain the service due to the nature of the job.

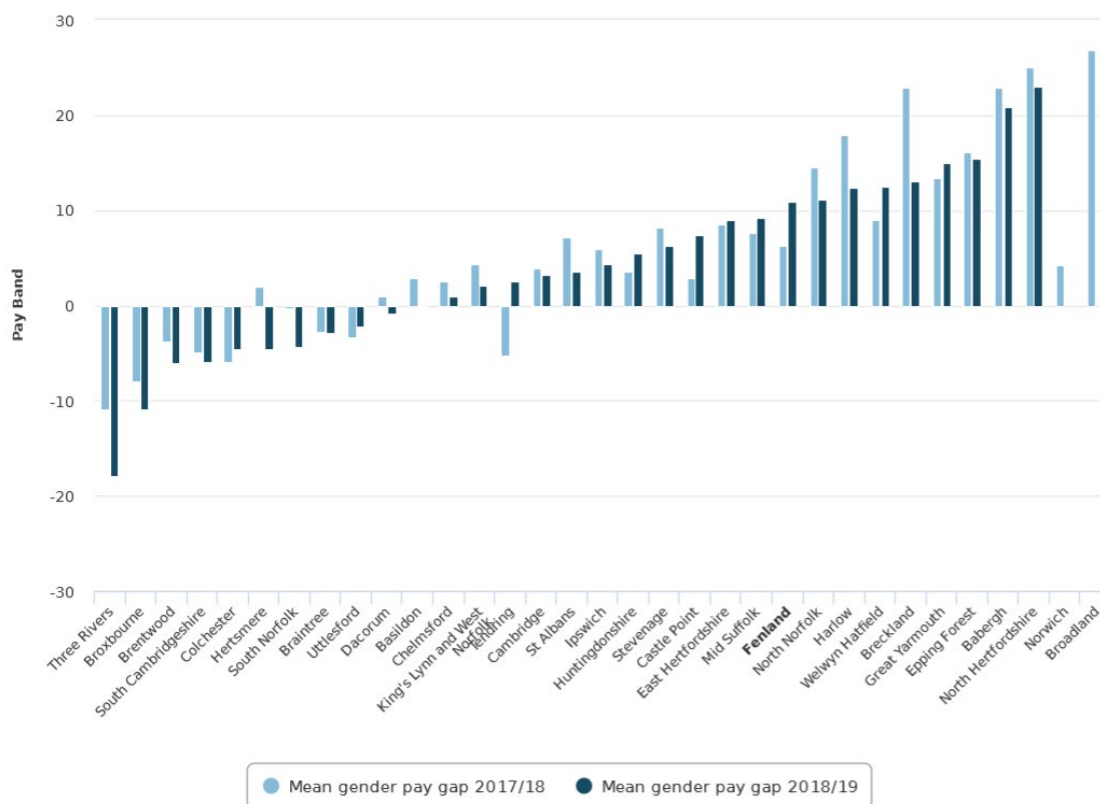
There is additional support offered to women returners to work following maternity/adoption leave in order to enable them to return to work and fit around their work life balance. Additionally there is shared parental leave that encourages male employees to also consider more time off for work life balance. We will continue to develop new ways of working that offers flexibility that enables employees to continue to develop within the organisation whilst still enabling them to get the best out of their home life.

Being able to care for others should be choice open to both men and women, and is a core issue when it comes to gender equality. It was therefore a key consideration when recently reviewing our policies and considering if our workplace culture is such that employees are supported to take on caring roles and responsibilities if they choose to.

## Comparison

Comparison of other local authority districts in the East of England:

**Mean gender pay gap (2017/18 and 2018/19) for All local authority districts in East**



## Recommendations

Although there is no significant gender pay gap identified, Fenland District Council remains committed to ensuring ongoing robust delivery of all people policies and practices to ensure no gender bias is in place when recruiting and appointing to new roles within.

Although these figures are favourable for the Council, we are not complacent and will continue to monitor our performance, along with initiatives that we have in place which have already contributed to these results such as:

- Family friendly policies and procedures
- Actively supporting parent returning to work from maternity leave, shared parental leave or adoptions leave by offering job share, career breaks or part time opportunities
- Career development opportunities
- Flexible working in many locations
- Compassionate and special leave arrangements
- Learning and development
- Apprenticeships
- Appraisals for all staff to allow for focussed discussions around learning and development
- Coaching programme
- Employee recognition scheme
- Salary bands that clearly show incremental progression and where appropriate related criteria.

The Council should continue to ensure that part time employees are well supported and are given opportunities to progress means that well-qualified, experienced women (and men who also take on caring responsibilities) are better able to keep participating in the workforce.

Any future action plan will need to focus on attaining even greater diversity in the workplace and we will continue to encourage and support all our employees to fulfil their full potential.

It is recommended that a further review is undertaken of these processes on a regular basis to ensure the ongoing delivery of best practice. The Council will continue to monitor the gender pay gap by reviewing it on a regular basis to ensure that our current good position is maintained. We remain committed to promoting Fenland District Council as a fair and inclusive employer.



**15 Workforce Profile:** Statistical analysis of the information regarding Council employees is contained in the following table and covers all Council employees.

**Equality breakdown of workforce – January 2020**

**Total Headcount = 356**

	<b>BAND</b> (Headcount)	<b>2</b> 41		<b>3</b> 35		<b>4</b> 32		<b>5</b> 91		<b>6</b> 22		<b>7</b> 66		<b>8</b> 22		<b>9</b> 12		<b>HAY &amp; CMT</b> 35	
		<b>28</b> F/T	<b>4</b> P/T	<b>23</b> F/T	<b>16</b> P/T	<b>27</b> F/T	<b>10</b> P/T	<b>32</b> F/T	<b>51</b> P/T	<b>24</b> F/T	<b>3</b> P/T	<b>34</b> F/T	<b>30</b> P/T	<b>16</b> F/T	<b>3</b> P/T	<b>13</b> F/T	<b>4</b> P/T	<b>27</b> F/T	<b>1</b> P/T
<b>Age</b>																			
0-16		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17-24		10	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-39		12	3	3	3	6	0	8	12	5	1	6	12	2	4	4	1	6	0
40-49		8	2	4	1	3	2	6	18	5	2	7	11	7	3	2	3	12	1
50-59		3	3	8	3	12	2	15	23	5	0	7	6	5	1	2	0	8	0
60-74		0	0	4	8	5	2	1	7	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	8	0
75-84		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
85+		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Disability (Self Identification)</b>																			
		1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Gender reassignment (Self Identification)</b>																			
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Current Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>																			
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Ethnicity (Self Identification)</b>																			
<b>WHITE</b>																			
British		21	4	17	12	22	6	20	52	12	2	18	31	11	6	4	2	23	1

Roma	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Irish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English Gypsy Traveller	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other Gypsy Traveller	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Black / Black British</b>																
African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Black	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Mixed Background</b>																
White & Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White & Black African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White & Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other mixed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Asian &amp; Asian British</b>																
Asian British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Chinese</b>																
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>European</b>																
Bulgarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Latvian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Romanian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Czech	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lithuanian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portuguese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Russian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Not stated</b>	12	4	3	1	3	10	2	2	4	2	10	0	1	2	4	0	11	0
<b>Other Ethnic origin</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	33	8	19	16	26	6	30	61	16	3	22	44	14	8	8	4	34	1

**Religion or Belief (Self Identification)**

Buddhist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muslim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christian	0	0	5	7	8	4	15	31	3	1	6	11	7	2	1	2	17	1
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sikh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	9	5	8	0	2	2	5	16	12	0	11	13	2	0	4	1	6	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	2	0	0	0	0
Not stated	0	0	6	3	9	2	9	9	5	2	8	9	3	0	2	1	8	1
<b>TOTALS =</b>	33	8	19	16	26	6	30	61	16	3	22	44	16	3	22	44	34	1

**Gender (Self Identification)**

Female	0	1	5	14	5	3	26	54	10	2	12	31	7	6	3	4	10	1
male	29	5	14	2	21	3	4	7	6	1	10	13	7	2	5	0	24	0
Transgender	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS =</b>	33	8	19	16	26	6	30	61	16	3	22	44	14	8	8	4	34	1

**Sexual orientation (Self Identification)**

Bisexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heterosexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lesbian  
Not stated  
TOTALS =

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
0	0	13	6	15	5	21	26	8	2	16	10	7	1	5	2	22	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



## **16: Flexible Working and Work Life Balance**

The Council offers employees flexible working hours and recognises the need for employees to work flexibly and is committed to optimising the opportunities to incorporate family friendly and flexible working practices where possible. The Council is committed to widening access to quality services through providing flexible modes of working and service delivery.

## **17: The Elected Councillors**

There were 39 Councillors of the District Council representing the whole district.

Equality monitoring data is held by the Council's Member Services.

## **18: Services Provided by the Council**

The Council seeks to "mainstream" equality into its services and functions.

Mainstreaming is an approach to delivering equality within an organisation. It is primarily a long- term strategy aimed at ensuring that equality principles and practices are integrated into every aspect of an organisation from the outset. The focus should not only be internal (mainstreaming equality principles into procedures and systems) but also external (mainstreaming equality principles into policies and customer service delivery). Mainstreaming provides a framework that facilitates and compliments, equalities legislation and other equality measures.

In simplistic terms this means integrating equality into our day-to-day work. We take equality and fairness into account in the way we go about our business when acting as an employer, when planning and providing services and when making decisions.

Mainstreaming ensures that equality becomes part of our culture. This will benefit both employees and service users who know that they will be treated fairly, and contributes to a continuous improvement and better performance.

Reporting on "mainstreaming" helps us to demonstrate the ways we are fulfilling our general equality duty.

Before we design a policy, procedure or function it is important for us to understand the needs of service users, including any needs due to having a protected characteristic. This information can be used to improve service/policy design and implementation.

The Service Planning approach specifically prompts and guides services to have regard to their equality duties; both with regard to implementing the Corporate Plan and the corporate objectives which may, for example, be identified through equalities analysis in Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments.

The Council has reviewed its equalities data and impact assessments; these are refreshed annually.

We use the Customer (Equality) Impact Assessment process as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues have been considered when drawing up Council policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of the Council's functions and employment practices.

The Council has regularly carried out and reviewed these assessments since 2002. Assessments are carried out when developing any new policy, plan or function, or making changes to an existing policy, plan or function, including the reduction or termination of a service as well as during development of the Council's annual budget proposals.

They identify any impacts on people or groups of people who possess any of the nine protected characteristics and on people who have caring responsibilities. Existing policies are screened as part of an annual review.

Impact Assessments help ensure that our service users receive services in a fair and equitable way ensuring that all are focused on outcomes. They provide an opportunity to stop or revise a policy or function which may potentially be unlawful.

They also contain mitigating actions wherever possible to minimise any adverse impacts, as well as identifying opportunities for positive impacts such as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

We use internal and external data to provide evidence for the assessments and consult directly with service users and equalities groups to proof our findings. Impact assessments are organic documents and are developed and added to as a project progress.

Where an impact assessment relating to a new policy has been carried out its findings is fed into any subsequent committee/ cabinet reports. This ensures elected members are fully aware when considering a report of any equality issues and/ or any negative and/ or cumulative effects on any of the protected characteristics to better inform the decision-making process.

These assessments are completed by Equality Service Champions. They help drive through the implementation of the Council's equality commitment and monitor service delivery outcomes within their service area. Guidance, support and advice are offered to those who may need assistance during the process. They are people from within the Council who represent each service team.

The Council places a strong emphasis on equality analysis. When developing policies and making decisions, the Council will make sure that those making the decisions know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can't then we should think carefully about whether we need to make a change to achieve a legitimate aim.

The Council can and do consult with a range of community groups, via the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum, around specific issues when completing equality analysis. These groups are often consulted when developing and refreshing policies, strategies, procedures and functions and act as the conduit to our vulnerable and minority communities for our annual consultation around the Councils Corporate Business Plan.

All the Councils equality analysis is publicly available via the Council website and are available in a variety of formats on request. We welcome people to challenge any equality analysis carried out by the Council.

## **19: Procurement**

The Councils procurement process of acquiring goods, works and services from third parties and in-house providers reflects the Council's commitment to equality and diversity. The

Council will seek to ensure that all external contractors that may deliver services on behalf of the Council embrace the principles of equality and diversity and can demonstrate this to us.

## **20: Working with Communities**

The Council recognises the decisions it makes and the services it delivers will be used by different people in different ways. Therefore, the Council aims to involve all communities in the decisions which affect them. All our current consultations are on our website and advertised through all of the usual methods of communication including Twitter, newsletters and direct action to vulnerable and minority groups including hard copies in community languages placed in community hubs and consultation events.

The Council has many ways of knowing its communities and collects equality related information from many sources to build a picture of our communities. This includes national, regional and local data and helps the Council to know what services our community require.

This part of the report contains information and case studies about some of the protected characteristic groups within Fenland. The case studies demonstrate some ways the Council and its partners are working to meet its equality duties.

## **21: Delivery of Council Strategies**

The Council consults and engages with its residents to collect information and data that can be used to better inform and plans and policies and to prioritise, identify areas for improvement and service change, set and monitor performance standards and measure satisfaction on the quality of the services we provide.

## **Our Equality Objectives and our Progress**

### **Summary of Corporate Priorities**

Our Equality ambition is to deliver a co-operative future where everyone does their bit to create a confident and ambitious district.

In our business plan [www.fenland.gov.uk/annualreport](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/annualreport) 4 priorities, Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation support delivery of our duties relating to the Equality Act 2010:

#### Communities

- Support vulnerable members of our community;
- Work with partners to promote Fenland through culture and heritage;
- Promote health and wellbeing for all.

#### Environment

- Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service;
- Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our streetscene;
- Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and promoting social cohesion'

#### Economy

- Attract new businesses and jobs, and support existing businesses in Fenland;
- Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland;
- Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district.

Underneath each of these priorities are key focus areas which link with supporting our Equality act objectives e.g. under environment's priority which references "social cohesion" there is a sub priority to:

"Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland wide Community Cohesion Action Plan and projects resourced by the Controlling Migration Fund.

As well as this under "Quality Organisation" it states:

- Equalities - Meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and Human Rights Act through our core service delivery. We the publish an Annual Equality Report to give transparency to our work.

## **Appendix**

### **Fenland Diverse Communities Forum**

The following projects and initiatives give a flavour to the work we do or enable through partnership working.

The Diverse Communities Forum (DCF) is a sustainable, multi-sector partnership that has received national recognition for making tangible differences to people's lives.

#### **What we have delivered**

We have previously reported that a Hate Crime Strategy has been agreed with the Police. As part of the approach to deliver this strategy several Hate Crime Reporting centres have been developed. As part of the strategy a Hate Crime Review Group has been established within the district. This forms part of the work of the Diverse Communities Forum/ Tension Monitoring Groups work. The group meets bi-monthly and is in touch via e-mail more regularly. The group discusses community tensions and trends. A review of all hate crime in the area from the previous two months is analysed and an update is provided on all hate crime incidents that have occurred in the district.

Work is currently focusing on raising awareness of hate crime through close partnership working and engaging with the most vulnerable members of the community. During Hate Crime Awareness Week, numerous awareness activities were planned across the district/ County with partner agencies such as Cambridgeshire Police and the Third Sector. Engagement stalls were displayed in libraries, community hubs and major supermarkets. From engagement with the public, we were able to highlight to the community what a hate crime is, how to report it and highlight the support services available to victims.

#### **Partnership and Governance**

The DCF is formed of over 30 partners across statutory, housing associations, health sector, community, voluntary and faith groups (full list in Appendix 1). They have been established for over 15 years and are a central hub for integration within Fenland. Partners successfully work together to tackle complex issues that cannot be addressed by a single organisation. Projects aim to:

- Promote integration and community cohesion
- Minimise/reduce community tensions
- Build good relations between people from different backgrounds/cultures
- Engage with minority groups
- Gather intelligence to inform service delivery and equality duties

The DCF continues to imaginatively use existing resources within the partnership to improve cohesion. However, it was recognised a greater investment was needed to tackle both specific and emerging issues. This prompted them to approach the Government's 'Controlling Migration Fund.'

Since February 2017, the DCF successfully bid for nearly £2.2million in Controlling Migration Funding (CMF). £632,062 was received during 2018/19 to extend 3 existing projects and get three new ones off the ground (see Appendix 1 for funding summary). Due to the consistency and relevancy of their outcomes, the work of the DCF has been recognised as best practice by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the East of England Local Government association. The partnership is well respected and consulted on important issues, recently being one of just 60 areas to be consulted about Brexit.

## Outcomes

Projects are at various stages; some at inception and others nearing completion. They are bringing a variety of benefits across all communities, with positive outcomes including:

- **2068 properties inspected** by the FDC Private Sector Housing Team, resulting in **843 enforcement actions**. Street-by-street inspections are uncovering hidden issues and providing valuable intelligence to support better property management.
- **Trained bi-lingual volunteers with a cultural knowledge of local communities**. Volunteers help people to improve their English language skills and can accompany them to appointments (e.g. hospital) by request. This has reduced demand for official, oversubscribed translation services and unnecessary repeat appointments.
- **Hundreds of people with improved language skills**. The College of West Anglia deliver alternative English Language courses to accommodate seasonal and full-time shift patterns. Courses span up to two years, drastically improving engagement and completion rates. Beyond official figures, hundreds of people are benefitting as delegates share their knowledge to upskill their community.
- **Communities brought together**. The 'Grow it, cook it' project has educated over 80 families, from all generations and backgrounds, to grow their own vegetables and prepare food. Delegates also gained a practical qualification (e.g. horticulture), improving their employment opportunities. Volunteers are also supporting the delivery of sports activities including yoga, football and basketball to tackle inequalities and reduce social isolation.
- **Increased research, understanding and awareness of local needs**. Funded by Ipsos Mori, a pilot research project is gathering information about the needs of local employers and the impact of Brexit. The data is being processed by universities and will shortly be shared at a national event.
- **Improved provision at the Wisbech Emergency Night Shelter**. Four extra beds have been created to meet increased occupancy needs. Tailored support for rough sleepers is also being delivered through a **dedicated Migrant Outreach** worker.
- **Better support for victims of modern-day slavery**. The Police have seen a significant increase in referrals as agencies have been trained to spot the almost invisible signs of exploitation and encourage victims to come forward. 100 delegates attended training, which is soon to be extended nationally.
- **Better understanding of Roma groups** who do not readily integrate with other communities, including their own. Research gathered detailed intelligence, the first of its kind, about Roma lifestyle, culture and living arrangements. This has been shared nationally and used to form local support groups.

## Appendix 2

### COVID Response to the National Lockdown

Vulnerability presented itself in many ways during the weeks and months of the national lockdown national emergency response.

In Fenland significant work was undertaken to establish mechanisms for supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis. This work cut across several key stakeholders from local government to the NHS, Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), food distributors, food charities and the wider Voluntary Community Services. The Councils has had a critical role in making sense of this at the local level and pulling it all together

### Local support system, hubs and the clinically vulnerable cohort

The Government tasked all parts of the country, via their Local Resilience Forums, to put in place arrangements for local support systems (LSS) responsible for receiving and responding to requests for help from the most clinically vulnerable people. The NHS had written to all people identified as being at highest clinical risk to COVID-19 in the district due to pre-existing health conditions, to ask if they required support with accessing food and medicine during the 12-week lock down period in which they 'shielded' at home. While locally a significant majority of this group was supported by family and friends, arrangements were being put in place so that those who need to could access support in the form of food deliveries and medicines.

For those that needed help and assistance a local community hub was established. The focus of the hub was to arrange help and support for the most vulnerable people. The local work required to support this group was dealing with any issues arising regarding provision of food, medicine , errands or chat to those who were urgently in need.

The hub was separate to the councils' usual Call Centre arrangements, which also received a high level of more general enquiries about COVID-19.

The NHS undertook its own work to put in place measures to provide support to the clinically vulnerable shielded group through volunteer capacity coordinated through the Good Sam App and creation of NHS Volunteer Responders. Volunteers helped with tasks such as delivering medicines from pharmacies; picking up additional shopping goods not covered by the existing scheme; driving patients to appointments; bringing them home from hospital and regular phone calls to check they are ok and offer much needed telephone companionship.

At a local level, community partners worked closely with the Council to address rough sleeping and those at risk of homelessness, food poverty as well as to put additional support in place for groups beyond the clinically vulnerable group being shielded who may be at risk of food poverty and/or hardship. This included, in particular, families with children who are already in or at risk of financial hardship.

#### Clear communications

The Council also ensured that the support available was communicated to the communities and consider how best to work with local community and voluntary groups to ensure those messages reached the right people. This was done via working with community, voluntary services and the faith sector as well as its own call Centre by continuing to have the most up to date information and making this available in local community languages.