

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

My name is Cllr Kathy Tumilty. I am one of three Councillors within Gooshays Ward. I was elected in May 2022. I therefore have recently just started my 2nd year as a ward Councillor. I am also the vice chair of the Places Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and chair of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

I was selected as the Havering Diversity and Equality champion in May 2022 and am honoured to be re-elected into the role for the period May 2023 to May 2024. This second year will enable an opportunity for the identified findings/actions from my first year to be further explored and progressed.

When considering Diversity and Equality we also need to include Inclusion and Accessibility. This is a required action within government and local policies as well as from the learning and actions identified from the LGA independent READI report.

Havering council has a zero-tolerance pledge. The pledge was signed in 2022 by all the councillors and includes 'to uphold a zero tolerance to racism and discrimination of any kind, calling out bad behaviours or practice that fall short of this'.

My aims and priorities within my first year as champion included:

- Championing diversity, equality, and inclusion within Havering.
- To clarify the support available to all Havering residents, especially the most vulnerable.
- To meet with residents and group/service coordinators to have a greater insight into the effectiveness of the provided support as well as the gaps.
- To consider the mechanisms/effectiveness of inclusiveness.
- Learning/next steps.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion have been considered within the committees I am part of. Although not by any means an exhaustive list, some examples have included:

- Discussions held around implementation of wheelie bins, which included consideration of the elderly.
- Parking machines for those unable to use an app has been a cross-party approach.
- SACRE has considered faiths in schools and has started a scoping exercise on the ease and challenges to locate information from school websites. Working with the schools if needed will support those residents who find digital working challenging.
- Highlighting the voices of children in care who have asked that they are provided with prayer/reflection space within their school settings within Havering.

The census completed in 2021 highlights that 75.3% of Havering residents identified as White, 10.7% as Asian or Asian British/Welsh, 8.2% Black, Black British/Welsh, Caribbean, or African categories and 3.7% mixed/multiple categories. The non-White population within Havering has increased since the last census completed in 2011. There have been a number of racial incidents across Havering and these present as being challenged by senior officers. I and another Councillor for example addressed an issue of racial graffiti on bus stops. TFL, SNT and Havering senior officers addressed the removal swiftly. We also cleaned off the graffiti ourselves on two occasions to ensure others would not be impacted by it.

I have been fortunate to have spent time with senior officers to go through the findings of the READI report and to look at how the learning and training can be assimilated into all roles within the Council. This includes cascading additional training to councillors. I was therefore part of a scoping meeting to consider a Councillor training programme to ensure it is meaningful, relevant, and worthwhile, which includes diversity, equality and inclusion. Although not fully concluded, it is being progressed. Diversity, equality, and inclusion training was held in May 2022 for all councillors and further on-going training will be progressed.

I have also met with officers and council workers as part of the women's forum in October 2022. This was a successful event held at the Town hall. Council workers at

the event advised that since the building refurbishments started at the Town Hall there has no longer been any space for a prayer room. This request was subsequently escalated.

Due to a prior engagement, I sadly was unable to give a requested talk at the BME community culture celebration held in October 2022. It had been hoped I could share with the BME forum the role/purpose of the equality, diversity and inclusion champion. I hope to be invited again this year. It was very disappointing that the Black history flag raising in October 2022 could not occur due to the flag being delayed. I am pleased however that an event at the Town Hall still took place.

I attended the LGBTQ+ progress flag ceremony in July 2022 at the town hall and felt very honoured to have the opportunity to be part of London Pride in July 2022 with four other councillors. This was a wonderful day especially to be able to see Havering residents and workers who were present alongside Havering looked after children.

I have been fortunate to see in action the impact of community groups across Havering. There are many I am yet to meet with, so this report only highlights a few and I look forward to meeting others. All the groups spoken to have advised strongly that the cost of living crisis has impacted on their members and changed how their support is being provided/funded. MIND for example provided examples of high increases to their helpline services due to emotional/mental health impact of debt. Services such as CAMHS have long waiting lists and children are also experiencing increased anxiety which includes emotionally based school avoidance. I have spoken with (and signposted) residents to national services such as MIND who run 6-week parent support groups and Young Minds who provide support for parents and children. Havering SEND also continue to provide invaluable support for children and their families who have additional needs.

The many food banks across Havering have highlighted increased numbers and financial challenges in having sufficient food supplies. Many churches and community halls have opened for additional hours/days to provide warm banks to help those in need. These services are increasing to meet the needs. This is evidencing support being fluid to meet the changing demands which is positive. Feedback is that residents who attend feel supported and included by services but often they do not know of the groups or how to access them. Only one complaint was provided, which was a disabled resident where there was limited access in a food bank for the wheelchair, which was swiftly addressed.

Lifeline community projects are providing a number of activities to support the local community. These include improv drama sessions for children aged 10-14 to build their confidence and self-esteem and coffee and chat mornings to help bring the local communities together to discuss and support each other.

NHS and Havering Core20plus5 is a group to ensure the voices of residents with healthcare needs are heard. Groups have included a maternity focus group, resident focus group, men's focus group, regeneration focus group and mental health focus group. Core20plus5 have also joined with Havering Changing for events.

The over 50's forum identifies a number of support services and groups for the over 50's. These interventions will be covered within the over 50's champion report.

Havering over the last year has embraced community events such as the jubilee celebrations. These have enabled participation and inclusivity of the community.

I have engaged with the House of Polish and European Community (HPEC) who are completing brilliant work supporting residents around immigration, community support/integration and mental health/wellbeing support. I have met with HASWA who are based in Elm Park. They provide a number of activities for the elderly Asian community in Havering including chair yoga and goldies sing and smile.

Havering Faith Forum play a large part in the integration of different faiths within Havering. They meet regularly as a group of 5 different faiths to consider core topics and how the faiths can have unity. The group helps educate and change perceptions of religion. The Salvation Army supports the faith forum. St Francis Hospice also held a session on different faiths and cancer.

Several events have been held by the Havering Faith Forum such as the annual interfaith cricket match. There were many events over the last 12 months which celebrated religions or traditions such as Chinese New Year even in the market, Diwali and at Easter the Faith Forum was part of an exhibition with other faiths with art being the topic of 'new beginnings'. Havering has also facilitated events such as the Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Faith Forum has been pivotal in enhancing faith awareness including a training session on Islamophobia.

I have worked closely with the Parks Team to consider how the parks can be accessible for disabled residents. To support this initiative, the following information has been provided:

Regarding equality and diversity, parks and spaces in Havering always strive to make parks accessible through:

- Step free access throughout.
- Good quality Paths.
- Accessible equipment in playgrounds such as flush roundabouts or accessible chairs on swings.
- Where car parks are available, there will also be a number of disabled parking bays.
- Simple changes in place such as improving sight lines across the site can improve accessibility and the feeling of safety on site.

Our green flag parks are judged on specific criteria including accessibility and the same ethos is maintained in the parks that are not green flag rated.

Recent path improvements have been made in Bridport Avenue and Havering Country Park. As part of the national highways designated funds running until 2025, the Parks Team have submitted several bids to improve current pathways. They also are using the funding to install new accessible pathways in the parks listed below:

Dagnam Park

Central Park

Lawns Park

Bedfords Park

Raphael Park

Harold Wood Park

Cottons Park

Collier Row Rec

Duck Wood

When considering diversity, equality, and inclusion, I am aware of pockets of the Borough where women do not feel safe to go to alone. I alongside other councillors have worked with local SNT Police to complete Walk and talk sessions for residents to take officers to areas of concerns. Sessions have also been arranged in a local library. These have been positive however numbers have been low due to people not being aware of these opportunities.

A reoccurring blockage theme has been communication. Communicating the available support to the residents of Havering and to those that need support remains inconsistent. From the people I have spoken to/liased with, there is a clear gap in how information can be shared/accessed. The consultation seeking people's views was very positively responded to. Online and paper versions were provided as well as face to face sessions. This enabled an opportunity for all residents to contribute.

On reflection, I recognise that my first year has been more of a learning role. The majority of my time has been spent seeking an understanding of the demographics of Havering as well as beginning to scope the number of community, voluntary, charitable, and religious groups in the Borough. This work has started but remains on-going.

Once I have a more conclusive update of available resources, I can move into the process of ascertaining what the core themes are regarding engagement and focus on the posed blockages as well as the strengths. Although I am disappointed to not have fully addressed my full set aims for the year, I do feel progression has been made. This report is not as detailed as I would have hoped to share but it does give examples of some the interventions and services available, and I hope enables enhancement of the identified gaps. I have focused this year in looking at ways to

enable blockages to be addressed. Having monthly Housing repair sessions with Housing officers and Mears in one Ward and open repair days in another ward has enabled progression of issues for residents who are unable to manage the processes of contacting Housing directly. I am also working with another Councillor to enhance face to face support sessions with the DWP for residents with additional needs, disabilities and the elderly.

I have found the champion role helpful to learn more about the time and dedication people are readily giving to facilitate groups, fund raising and providing support to those who need it. I applaud their work and achievements. I endeavoured this year to ensure I represented myself ethically and professionally as the diversity, equality and inclusion champion and look forward to continuing the role. I will continue to promote that equality is not about treating people equally but providing the required support and intervention to achieve.

My aims for 2022/23 remain the same for 23/24:

- Championing diversity, equality, and inclusion within Havering.
- To clarify the support available to all Havering residents, especially the most vulnerable.
- To meet with residents and group/service coordinators to have a greater insight into the effectiveness of the provided support as well as the gaps.
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