

Report Title:	Corporate Plan Review & Draft Equality Objectives
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	
Meeting and Date:	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 17 November 2022
Responsible Officer(s):	Rebecca Hatch, Head of Strategy
Wards affected:	All

www.rbwm.gov.uk



## REPORT SUMMARY

- This report sets out key changes in context since the publication of the Corporate Plan in November 2021 to inform an annual review of the Plan. It considers how the Plan may be suitably refreshed to ensure that the council remains on course to achieve its vision, objectives and priorities.*
- A key opportunity as part of this review is to strengthen focus on preventing and tackling inequalities. The report outlines draft revised equality objectives (Appendix B) for the council, which will be agreed as part of the refresh.*

### 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- Considers the changes in context.**
- Provides feedback in relation to the draft equality objectives.**

### 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

#### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Accept the recommendations in this report. <b>This is the recommended option</b>	Panel Members are invited to provide feedback on the changes in context since publication of the Corporate Plan; and to provide feedback on the draft equality objectives, with recommendations made where appropriate.
Not accept the recommendations in the report.	Panel Members choose not to consider and provide feedback on these items.

## Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan is a key component of good governance and recognises that the council has to make choices about where it focuses its resources. Adopted in November 2021, the Plan sets out 3 overarching objectives – “Thriving communities”, “Inspiring places” and “A council trusted to deliver its promises” – and 50 related goals for achievement in the period 2021-2026. These goals intentionally do not cover the full range of activities and services provided by the council, rather they are focused on addressing the key challenges identified and where the council needs to drive change.
- 3.2 The Plan emerged from an evidence-base and was shaped by consultation in Summer 2021 and a focused “challenge session” by the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel in October 2021. Performance and progress against the Plan’s goals is routinely published to the public-facing [Citizens’ Portal](#) in the interests of transparency and accountability. Performance is shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel on an exception basis. Metrics and activities that meet agreed exceptions criteria – or metrics/activities that do not meet agreed criteria but Officers’ judgement is that scrutiny is merited – are routinely reported to the Panel.
- 3.3 The council, along with all organisations, is susceptible to changing factors in the external environment, such as political, financial, social, technological, legal and regulatory factors. It is essential that the council remains resilient to any changes in the external and internal environment by monitoring and adapting strategic plans when appropriate. Officers are therefore currently reviewing the Corporate Plan in the context of changed factors in both the external and internal environment (see section 3.4 - 3.7); new evidence and insights generated throughout 2022 (see section 3.8 - 3.15); and performance data (see section 3.16 - 3.17).

## Key changes in context since the Plan’s adoption

- 3.4 The council’s operating context has changed substantially over the course of the year. In particular, rises in the cost of living have caused challenges for our residents, staff and for the organisation as a whole – with serious impacts for our 2023-24 budget and longer-term financial sustainability. Key changes are summarised below:

### Changes in the external context

- 3.5 **Cost of living crisis:** the crisis is affecting many householders across the UK due to a combination of factors including: rises in energy bills, inflation causing increases in prices for necessities like food and fuel, falling incomes and increased interest rates. The economic situation has been exacerbated by the Russian-Ukraine war. Our voluntary and community sector partners are seeing increasing demand for food banks, debt advice and wider support services, and health partners are already severely over-stretched in advance of winter.

- 3.6 **Change in political leadership:** Changes in central government leadership across September and October have generated an uncertain time for local authorities across the country as new plans and policies are developed centrally. September also saw the sad passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, for whom Windsor was the Monarch's main residence.

### **Changes in the financial context**

- 3.7 **Financial:** A number of key financial challenges are impacting on the organisation's short- and medium-term outlook, many of which are the same for the majority of Local Authorities. RBWM continues to suffer additional financial risk due to its low council tax rates and historically low level of reserves, although in recent years these have been strengthened. Our Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy (and underpinning Medium Term Financial Plan) mutually inform one another. Finance is both the enabler that allows the council to deliver its Corporate Plan, and the constraint that the council needs to work within as it makes difficult decisions about prioritising resource. This year's budget is particularly challenging. The Corporate Plan priorities and performance provide a framework for making difficult resourcing decisions. In turn, the Corporate Plan and associated delivery plans must reflect the resources available.

### **New evidence and insights generated throughout 2022**

- 3.8 During 2022 the council has benefited from new evidence and insights. Firstly from the RBWM 2022 Residents' Survey, published in October 2022, and through the ongoing phased release of Census 2021 data. The council has also undertaken research on inequalities and disadvantage in the borough through the Inequalities project, in addition to ongoing strengthening of an evidence-based approach to decision-making.
- 3.9 **Residents Survey:** The Residents' Survey 2022, conducted by an independent research provider, interviewed a representative sample of 1,740 residents through both telephony and face-to-face interviews. The Survey provides a wealth of evidence to inform decision-making as well as wider service and policy design. The results of the Residents Survey were published in October 2022, and are attached at Appendix A for reference.
- 3.10 Overall the Survey found high levels of satisfaction with the borough as a place to live (89%), and trust in the council (70%). However, analysis reveals specific cohorts experiencing difficulty, and whose contrasting opinions need to be considered in future strategy. These include:
- residents aged 18-34.
  - residents with Black, Asian or Mixed ethnicities.
  - residents whose activities are limited due to a health condition (henceforth, those with a disability).
  - residents who are not employed (excluding retired).

- 3.11 The findings provide assurance that the Corporate Plan priorities reflect the priorities of residents. When asked what makes the area a good place to live, the borough's parks and nature were the top two responses, and there were high levels of support for Climate Change as a priority for the council (84% agreeing). Roads maintenance and transport issues dominated top areas for improvement, supporting the Corporate Plan priorities around infrastructure; and housing affordability comes through as a key concern for those in younger age groups.
- 3.12 The Survey found that cost of living dominates as the primary concern for respondents (53%) over the next 1-3 years, with 18-34s, renters and ethnic minorities showing the highest levels of concern. 6% of respondents stated that they are finding things quite or very difficult financially. 25% said that they are just getting by. The cost of living rises have become a priority nationwide, since the Plan was agreed last November.
- 3.13 The borough's strong communities come through as a theme: 72% of respondents agree that **people pull together to improve their local area** – and just over a third (36%) of respondents claim they take part in local community groups, activities or events at least once a month. However, engagement in community activities is lower amongst residents aged 75 & over, residents with a disability, and residents who rent from the council, housing association or trust.
- 3.14 **Census 2021:** data is being released in phases by the Office for National Statistics over the course of 2022. From releases to date, however, we do know that RBWM has seen a population increase of 6.2% from 2011 (144,600) to 2021 (153,500). The RBWM increase is lower than the overall increase seen for England (6.6%) and the South East (7.5%) over the same period. Overall the population has aged since the 2011 census and the borough has seen decreases in key population groups 0-4yrs (-14.6%) and 20-44yrs (ranging from -2.1% to -9.5%). There have been increases in the population age-groups, 55-59yrs (+32.3%) and 70-74yrs (+33.2%). A growing and ageing population has implications for demand for services, particularly adult social care. It also has implications for infrastructure planning and the suitability of housing stock to meet changing needs over people's lifetimes.
- 3.15 **Inequalities Project:** The council has also undertaken a cross-council project to strengthen our understanding of inequalities and disadvantage in the borough, in order to support development of a stronger approach to preventing and reducing inequalities. A cross-council team has undertaken a programme of interviews with service-providers, community groups and the Voluntary Sector. Focus groups and interviews with residents are currently under way. This engagement is supplemented by analysis of quantitative data and key statistics. The findings from this project are currently being developed and will be shared with the Panel once they have been finalised. However, the importance of preventative support, and of empowering families and communities, are key themes emerging.

## **Progress and performance against the Corporate Plan**

- 3.16 Performance and progress against the Plan's goals is routinely published to the public-facing [Citizens' Portal](#) in the interests of transparency and accountability. Performance is shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel on an exception basis. With the Corporate Plan focused on delivery over a 5-year period, there are some goals where performance impact cannot yet be definitively determined until further data is made available.
- 3.17 However, key areas of concern highlighted in the most recent performance report as worsening since their last available data-point include increasing numbers of households in temporary accommodation (albeit with an improvement since the last reporting period in the percentage of households in temporary accommodation that is located within the borough). This reflects wider challenges within housing – where rising private rental prices, rising demand for social housing and temporary accommodation (including from increased numbers of refugees), are causing additional pressures on housing stock. This reinforces the Corporate Plan's prioritisation of a ladder of affordable housing.

## **Implications for the Corporate Plan**

- 3.18 The review of the Corporate Plan will not see the overarching objectives and priorities of the council change. However, the review will consider the changes in context and key implications from the new evidence set out in this report. These implications include:
- Reflecting the impacts of Cost of Living rises and the council's response.
  - A greater focus on prevention, both to decrease demand and improve outcomes.
  - Increased emphasis on reducing inequalities, supported by a new set of Equality Objectives (see section 3.20 - 3.23).
  - Increased emphasis on partnership working – including the council's Place Leadership role and stronger engagement with community and voluntary sector partners.
  - Reflection of budgeting decisions and increased financial pressures.
- 3.19 The Panel is asked to review the summary above and to provide their feedback and input.

## **Revised equality objectives 2022**

- 3.20 The Corporate Plan states that we “recognise that we need to better understand the inequalities that affect different groups within the borough, in order to ensure that those experiencing disadvantage and inequality are able to access appropriate, effective and early support within their communities” and

commits to further evidence-gathering and publication of new Equality objectives.

- 3.21 The new evidence and insights generated during 2022 has supported the council in the reformulation of its equality objectives. The council has a legal obligation to publish equality objectives at least every 4 years under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.
- 3.22 Appendix B sets out the draft equality objectives. These have been developed with reference to the 2018 equality objectives and the Local Government Association’s Equality Framework. Priorities identified through the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge have also been incorporated, and relevant equality-related goals from the Corporate Plan. Engagement has also been undertaken with groups including the Disability and Inclusion Forum and KickBack. Feedback from colleagues in relevant service areas has also helped to shape the objectives and ensure that they are measurable and consistent with service objectives.
- 3.23 The final agreed objectives will support the Corporate Plan. Panel Members are invited to share their views on these objectives ahead of their recommendation to Cabinet for adoption.

#### 4. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The key implications of this report are set out in table 2.

**Table 2: Key Implications**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
Corporate Plan is reviewed after 12mth to assess changes in external and internal context to ensure it remains relevant.					January 2023
Equality objectives are strengthened to reflect priorities on tackling inequalities.					January 2023

#### 5. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, as noted, the Corporate Plan priorities and performance provide a framework for making difficult resourcing decisions. In turn, the

Corporate Plan and associated delivery plans must reflect the resource allocations agreed through the Budget process.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities to publish equality objectives at least every 4 years.

## 7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The risks and their control are set out in table 3.

**Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Level of uncontrolled risk</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Level of controlled risk</b>
The risk that the council does not meet its legal obligations under the Equality Duty	High	Refreshed objectives and monitoring arrangements adopted	Low

## 8. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 8.1 There are no Equality Impact Assessments or Data Protection Impact Assessments required for this report. There are no climate change or data protection impacts as a result of this report.

## 9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Corporate Plan went out to public consultation in Summer 2021 and the consultation results informed the final Corporate Plan adopted by Full Council in November 2021. The draft equality objectives have been formulated based on evidence and through engagement with groups including the Disability and Inclusion Forum and KickBack.

## 10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 10.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

**Table 4: Implementation timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
December 2022	Revised Equality Objectives published.
January 2023	Corporate Plan Annual Progress Report and Review shared at Cabinet.

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 This report has two appendices:

- Appendix A: Residents Survey Results
- Appendix B: Draft equality objectives

## 12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 This report is supported by one background document:

- [Corporate Plan 2021-26](#)

## 13. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputy)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	04.11.22	
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	04.11.22	07.11.22
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive	04.11.22	07.11.22
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	04.11.22	07.11.22
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People	04.11.22	07.11.22
<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	04.11.22	07.11.22

## REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Rebecca Hatch, Head of Strategy and Rachel Kinniburgh, Service Lead – Strategic Policy, Performance and Insights



# 2022 RBWM Residents Survey

## Headline Results



# Contents

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
<a href="#">Introduction</a>	3
<a href="#">Profile of Residents surveyed</a>	4
<a href="#">A council trusted to deliver its promises</a>	5
<a href="#">Communicating and accessing services</a>	6
<a href="#">Satisfaction with Local Area as a place to live</a>	7
<a href="#">What makes the area a good place to live</a>	8
<a href="#">What needs improving?</a>	9
<a href="#">Strength of community</a>	10
<a href="#">Feelings of Safety – Women’s Safety</a>	11
<a href="#">Concern about anti-social behaviour</a>	12
<a href="#">Finances and the Cost of Living</a>	13
<a href="#">Loneliness and health</a>	14
<a href="#">Mental health and Life Satisfaction</a>	15
<a href="#">Housing</a>	16
<a href="#">Snapshot – Variations by area</a>	17
<a href="#">Snapshot – Variations by cohort</a>	18

# Introduction

Our 2022 RBWM Residents Survey was carried out in July and August 2022.

Lake Market Research, working on behalf of RBWM contacted 1740 residents including:

- 1626 by telephone
- 114 face to face in the street

Residents were randomly selected and quotas set to ensure the profile of respondents was representative of the borough.

The survey focused on residents' perception of:

- The Council
- The Community & Local Area – including strengths and challenges
- The Individual - including household concerns & finances, health & wellbeing

We will use the Survey's insights extensively to support our work, including but not limited to:

1. Refreshing our Corporate Plan
2. Developing key evidence bases for council planning and decision making
3. Updating our Service Plans

# Profile of residents surveyed

Representative against the following quotas



## Age:

- 22% aged 18-34
- 39% aged 35-54
- 27% aged 55-74
- 12% aged 75 & over

## Home ownership:

- 68% home owner / buying with mortgage
- 13% rent from council, housing association or trust
- 16% rent from private landlord

## Working status:

- 64% working
- 9% not working
- 26% retired

## Ethnicity:

- 72% White
- 11% White Other
- 3% Black / Black British
- 10% Asian / Asian British
- 2% Mixed

## Gender:

- 50% male
- 50% female

## Activities limited due to health condition or illness:

- 15% yes
- 84% no

# A Council trusted to deliver its promises

Residents' perceptions of the council are high, and are above the Local Government Association national benchmarks on trust, satisfaction with the council and value for money.



## Trust in the Council

70% of respondents said they had a fair amount or a great deal of trust in the RBWM, this was considerably higher than the LGA benchmark of 58% and slightly higher than the 2018 RBWM survey.



## Satisfaction with the Council

66% of those surveyed were very or fairly satisfied with the way the RBWM runs things. This is higher than the LGA benchmark of 63% but shows a decrease from the 74% expressing satisfaction in 2018.



## Value for Money

Just over half agree that the council provides value for Money (52%). This is higher than the LGA benchmark of 45%, but lower than the 2018 result of 63%.

The LGA benchmark sees fluctuation in these metrics over time, with an increase in rates at the height of the pandemic, and then fall.

Those who live in Maidenhead, not in work and those with a disability showed lower satisfaction across all three metrics.

# Communicating and accessing services

Most residents happy to use our online services

## Online services

**71% of respondents indicated they would or already access transactional services online.**

**17% indicated they would not.**

Why not? The most common reasons were:

- a preference for alternative means of contact, 21%
- not using the council's online services before, 19%
- concern whether a response would be received online, 16%

Those less likely to use online services include:

- Women
- those over 75,
- those not working
- those with a disability
- social renters.



## Receiving communications

Residents top choices for receiving communications about council services and local issues were:



**email newsletters, 30%**



**the council website, 24%**



**printed information, 19%**

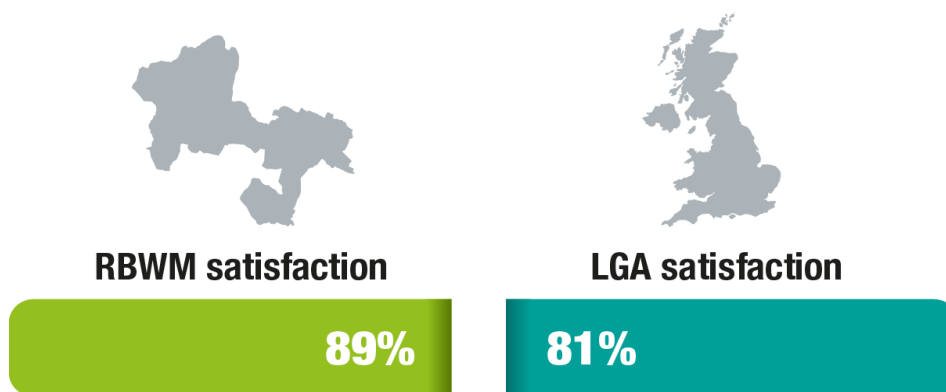
The council's social media, and speaking to council staff were the next popular options at 7% each.

Printed information was a higher priority for residents over 55, those with a disability and those finding it hard financially.

# Satisfaction with Local Area as a place to live

Most residents satisfied with the local area

**The vast majority of our residents (89%) are satisfied with the area as a place to live.** Only 6% of residents are dissatisfied. This is above the LGA benchmark.



Satisfaction is high across all groups, but is notably lower amongst

- residents living in Maidenhead
- female residents
- residents aged 75 & over
- residents whose activities are limited due to a health condition (henceforth, those with a disability)
- residents renting from the council, housing association or trust

These same groups also tend to score less positively across other questions around satisfaction.

# What makes the area a good place to live

The natural environment is key to RBWM Residents

When asked what makes the area a good place to live, the borough's green and open spaces were the top two responses:

- **the quality of parks & open spaces (45%)**
- **access to nature / the countryside (34%)**



Almost **two thirds (66%)** of our residents are **accessing green spaces** at least once a week.

The **vast majority (94%)** consider it **easy to access** quality green spaces in the Borough; 62% find it very easy.

Private renters, 18-34s and disabled residents are **least likely** to say it is very easy to access green spaces.

Concerns about mobility, a lack of car parking facilities and not being able to visit without a car were cited as the key barriers.

**More than four in five residents (84%) said that tackling climate change should be a priority for the council.**





# What needs improving?

Transport and waste are top areas of improvement for residents

The top five things that residents would like to see improved in their local area are focused on transport, waste and high streets.



**Road maintenance (28%)**



**Parking (14%)**



**Rubbish and refuse collection (19%)**



**Traffic and congestion (12%)**



**Town centres/ High Streets / Shopping facilities (14%)**



# Strength of Community

RBWM Residents have a strong sense of community



**Just under three quarters of respondents (72%) agree people pull together to improve their local area.**

This was higher than comparable national results of 65%<sup>1</sup>.

- 23% of respondents said that community support and helping each other was what makes the area a good place to live (the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest response).
- **64% have helped a friend or neighbour over the past year.** Helping neighbours and friends is the most common way for people to engage with their community.
- **Almost three quarters (72%) agree that there are opportunities to get involved with community activities.** And just over a third (36%) of respondents claim they take part in local community groups, activities or events at least once a month.
- Engagement in community activities is lower amongst residents aged 75 & over, residents with a disability, and residents who rent from the council, housing association or trust. More than half of these groups do not engage in any community activities.

[1] [Community Life Survey 2020/21 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

# Feelings of Safety – Women’s Safety

Residents feel safe but gender matters

- **97% of Residents feel safe** in their local area in the day, **82% after dark**. These are **higher** than the LGA benchmarks of 95% and 76% respectively.
- However, **women feel less safe than men** both in the day and at night. Whilst similar proportions feel “**safe**” in the day, only 64% of women feel “**very safe**” in the day, compared to 70% of men.

This gender gap in feeling safe is even more pronounced after dark:



**75% of Women feel safe in their local area at night**

This is significantly lower for those 75+ & Social Renters



**89% of Men feel safe in their local area at night**

This is stable across groups, with no group <87%



# Concern about anti-social behaviour

ASB is not the primary concern for most residents



**Just over a quarter (27%) of residents indicated they are concerned about anti-social behaviour in their local area; 40% are not concerned.**

- For those who are concerned, their top concerns were around groups of young people and drug taking or dealing.
- 18% of residents felt that low crime and safety makes the local area a good place to live. This is twice the number (9%) who felt that crime and safety is something that needs improving.
- A lower proportion of under 35s and over 75's indicated they were concerned compared to other age groups. The proportion 'concerned' is comparably higher amongst residents of Windsor, Ascot and the south.

# Finances and the Cost of Living

Cost of living a key concern for residents



**The cost of living is the biggest concern for residents over the next 1-3 years.**

**Over half of respondents (53%) named it as their top worry, and over two thirds (70%) of 18-34s.**

- Rates of concern were also very high among private renters (74%), social renters (70%), and those who already finding things difficult (95%).
- **Over two thirds say their household is living comfortably financially or doing all right.** Just under a third are just about getting by or finding it difficult. Of these 6% are finding things quite or very difficult. 25% are just getting by.
- There is wide variation across groups. 48% of younger residents (18-34) are just about getting by or finding it difficult, compared to only 15% of over 75s.
- Those who are not working, have a disability, of Black / Asian / Mixed ethnicity and renting socially or privately are also more likely to be just about getting by or finding it difficult.

## Loneliness and health

Most residents feel healthy and supported, but loneliness is more common among certain groups.

72%



**Just under three quarters (72%) claim they never or hardly ever feel lonely.**

12%



**12% indicated they feel lonely always, often or some of the time** Over a quarter (26%) of those with a disability felt lonely always, often or some of the time, one in five (20%) of those who are not working, and 15% of over 75s.

82%



**82% consider their health to be good or very good in general**, with rates declining with age, as might be expected. Those who are not working, or who are renting from the council, housing association or trust, also reported more ill health.

# Mental health and life satisfaction

Most residents are satisfied with life, but with variations



**The majority of respondents (85%) indicated a high level of satisfaction with their life nowadays, rating their satisfaction as at least 7 out of 10.**

- However, high satisfaction scores were less common among respondents who are finding it difficult financially (54%) or living with a health condition (61%).
- 29% of residents reported high levels of anxiety about the future. This rose to over half (53%) of those finding it difficult financially.
- Women (35%) were more likely to feel anxious about the future than men (24%).
- The groups most likely to report mental health as one of their key concerns over the next 1-3 years were 18-34s (19%) and social renters (18%). These are at least three times the overall rate of 6%.

# Housing

## Housing a key concern among younger residents

- Almost a third (31%) of 18-34 year olds cited **access to affordable housing** as one of their biggest concerns over the next 1-3years, much higher than the 13% of all residents.
  - 18-44 yr olds were more likely to say they were **considering moving out of the borough** than the 45+ age groups
  - 40% of 18-34 year olds cited the affordability of housing as a reason.
- 
- **Renters (social and private) were more concerned about their household finances.** 74% of social renters and 70% of private renters reported being very or extremely concerned about the rising cost of living.
  - 65% of those socially renting and 60% of those privately renting said that financially their households were just about getting by or finding it difficult, compared to 32% of residents overall.





# Snapshot – variations by area

## Ascot and surrounding areas

- Most satisfied with their local area and with the council.
- Most likely to agree that people pull together to improve the local area.
- Find it less easy to access green spaces.
- Most concerned about rising cost of living.

## Windsor

- Less likely to feel safe after dark, and more likely to list crime and safety as a concern.
- More likely to state concerns about housing security/affordability.
- Scoring between Ascot and Maidenhead on satisfaction and other key statistics.

## Maidenhead

- Residents had significantly lower rates of satisfaction with their local area, satisfaction with and trust in the council, and perceptions of value for money.
- Maidenhead residents were more likely to list over-development / losing the greenbelt as concerns.
- More likely to want to be involved in community activities.
- More likely to visit green spaces at least once per week.
- Less concerned about ASB.

# Snapshot – variations by cohort

Analysis reveals specific cohorts experiencing difficulty and whose contrasting opinions need to be considered in future strategy

## 18 – 34 Year Olds

Responses indicate **high levels of concern about housing, financial security, and mental health & wellbeing** in next 1-3 years.

## Not Working (excluding Retired)

Responses indicate higher levels of **loneliness, and lower overall health. Respondents were** also more likely to be finding it **difficult financially.**

## Black, Asian & Mixed Ethnicities

Responses indicate higher levels of concern about **access to housing** and the **cost of living.** Also finding it **harder to access quality green spaces.**

## Activities limited due to health condition or illness

Responses indicate lower rates of **life and local area satisfaction and higher rates of loneliness.** Plus **lower rates of community engagement.**

## APPENDIX B: DRAFT EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1 (*understanding and engaging*): Investigate and strengthen our understanding of the nature of inequality, disadvantage, and discrimination in RBWM**

**Outcome 1: A stronger understanding of the nature of equality, disadvantage, and discrimination in RBWM**

### **1.1 Activities: Strengthen the council's insights and evidence on inequalities and disadvantage**

- Develop a stronger, cross-council evidence base on inequality and disadvantage in the borough through Phase 1 of the Inequalities Project.
- Analyse and use information from census, the Residents Survey, to strengthen our understanding of the nature and impact of inequalities.
- Strengthen performance measures on equalities within the Corporate Plan and across Service Plans and contract monitoring.

### **1.2 Activities: Strengthen relationships with diverse groups in our communities, and specifically those with, or representing those with, protected characteristics**

- Build and maintain relationships with groups who reflect the diversity of the community and represent the protected characteristics, including the Disability and Inclusion Forum, the Older Persons' Advisory Forum, KickBack and the interfaith WAM Community Forum.
- Develop a better understanding of the diversity of local faiths and cultures and take advantage of festivals, awareness events and celebration days to celebrate that diversity through external communications and engagement.
- Continue to empower and engage with the community through the Embedding Community Response programme and initiatives such as the World Cafés.

### **1.3 Activities: Ensure engagement activities are inclusive and provide opportunities for community involvement in decision making**

- Support the identification of appropriate stakeholders to contribute to engagement activities that seek to improve equality and inclusion.
- Develop an engagement framework which can be used by RBWM staff to understand the different levels of engagement (i.e. informing, consulting, participating, co-producing) and identify opportunities for community engagement and participation.
- Undertake effective and mutually beneficial engagement activities, with a focus on ensuring that those with protected characteristics and from under-represented communities are encouraged to participate and have their voices heard.
- Communicate information in an inclusive way, taking account of the language and format preferences/needs of different groups

**Objective 2 (cultural/organisational change): Acknowledge and respond to the equality impacts of our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts where possible, whilst maximising positive impacts**

## **Outcome 2: An organisation focused on reducing inequalities**

### **2.1 Activities: Embed a greater awareness of equalities across the organisation**

- Promote an evidence-based narrative around inequalities in RBWM and raise the profile of equalities work
- Engage with colleagues and partners to share insights gained from inequalities data gathering and communicate where findings have relevance for a certain service and area of work.

### **2.2 Activities: Improve the consistency and quality of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to influence and support decision-making**

- Develop comprehensive guidance in relation to EqlA development, including training and support for officers and elected members
- Improve the use of evidence to support EqlAs through an Equalities Evidence Matrix and targeted support to services to ensure equality impacts are assessed and reflected in key decisions
- Ensure that appropriate action plans are developed in cases where EqlAs identify negative equality impacts and monitor the delivery of these mitigating actions
- Review and improve the efficiency of the EqlA development process by grouping relevant papers under a single EqlA, particularly those relating to the budget
- Embed EqlAs into the early development of policies, strategies and related projects to improve their potential impact on decision-making
- Promote the use of EqlAs as iterative documents which should be reviewed and updated over the course of the development and delivery of a policy/strategy/project

### **2.3 Activities: Establish clear political and officer leadership on equalities**

- Elected members demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of local communities and demonstrate a public commitment to reducing inequality, fostering good community relations and challenging discrimination.
- Provide briefings and reports to councillors, including the Corporate Oversight and Scrutiny Panel, on key equalities issues and activities
- Mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training is provided for elected members as part of new member induction and on an ongoing annual basis.
- Support members to be more effective in their ward work and aware of the diversity of the communities they represent
- Mandatory attendance on KickBack's Total Respect Training for members of the Corporate Parenting Forum, and attendance encouraged for other officers and Members as part of their role as a Corporate Parent

**Objective 3 (*making changes and impact to equality*): Integrate equality considerations into planning and procurement processes, in order to deliver services effectively for all communities**

**Outcome 3: A council which delivers services effectively for all its communities**

**3.1 Activities: Ensure that the accessibility of physical and digital spaces and resources is considered in the planning and delivery of policies and services**

- Ensure that digital and printed resources continue to meet accessibility requirements
- Consider the impact of the digitisation of key resources and services and aim to mitigate any negative or exclusionary impacts
- Ensure that the Report It tool is effective and inclusive for reporting accessibility issues
- Develop a Customer Strategy which serves all members of our diverse community

**3.2 Activities: Strengthen the incorporation of equality considerations within the development of KPIs as part of the pre-procurement process**

- Use EqlAs consistently within pre-procurement to ensure that any equality considerations are identified at an early stage
- Ensure that appropriate KPIs are developed and monitored, where potential equality impacts have been identified
- Encourage ongoing monitoring of recruitment-related equality considerations by suppliers and partners

**3.3 Activities: Integrate equality objectives into planned service outcomes**

- Integrate equality objectives into organisational strategies and plans, including the Corporate Plan and its associated goals
- Demonstrate evidence of a link between equality objectives, business planning and performance management
- Service plans monitored to ensure equality objectives are met, with action taken if risks to achievement are identified

**3.4 Activities: Develop a stronger, community-based approach to prevent and reduce inequalities**

- Strengthen our approach to preventing and reducing inequalities through community-based solutions as identified in Phase 2 of the Inequalities Project

## **Objective 4: Reduce inequalities within the borough**

**Outcome 4: A reduction in inequalities within the borough, focused particularly upon the following outcomes:**

**4.1 Activities: An increase in the proportion of women and girls who feel safe in the borough, including through a safe, thriving night-time economy.**

- Continue the White Ribbon communication campaign and/or work towards White Ribbon accreditation
- Use Residents Survey data to assess women and girls' perception of safety in their local area

**4.2 Activities: An increase in the attainment ranking for children in care, SEND and children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in GCSE English and Maths.**

- Increase the number of children in care, SEND and children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving Grade 4 English and Maths at GCSE. 2022 data will be used to set the baseline

**4.3 Activities: More people with learning disabilities live in their own homes or with their families, increasing the proportion by 10 percent points by 2025.**

- Increase the percentage of working age learning disabled clients who are living in their own home to 82.4% by 2025 (from a baseline of 72.4% in March 2020)
- Improve outcomes for adults with a learning disability in settled accommodation by improving their safety, reducing their risk of social exclusion and promoting a positive experience of social care

**4.4 Activities: Seek to support our vulnerable residents through the cost of living rises, through targeted financial support and practical assistance**

- Promote existing sources of support and information, through the Here to Help campaign
- Incorporate socio-economic considerations into EqIAs alongside protected characteristics
- Consider the potential for cost of living rises to create new forms of inequality and exacerbate existing ones

**4.5 Activities: Embed accessibility into the planning and design of our streetscape and public spaces**

- Engage with communities most likely to experience accessibility issues, specifically people with long term conditions, disabilities and age-related mobility problems, to identify priorities and establish where accessibility improvements have the greatest impact
- Identify an annual allocation of capital funding (amount tbc) to be spent on accessibility priorities
- Incorporate an engagement step into the capital design process, giving the Disability and Inclusion Forum the opportunity to provide feedback on accessibility at the planning stage
- Seek to expand the accessible online accessibility guide to Maidenhead town centre

#### **4.6 Activities: Seek to ensure every child has the best start in life, from a healthy pregnancy through to a healthy life**

- Better understand why children and young people in some wards/communities in the borough have worse outcomes than others and work collaboratively to reduce inequalities
- Improve school readiness in disadvantaged children, particularly those who are eligible for Free School Meals
- Reduce differences between wards in the proportion of children who are overweight or obese.

### **Objective 5 (workforce/HR): Recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve and ensure our people feel valued and respected**

#### **Outcome 5: A diverse workforce, reflective of the communities we serve, in which all colleagues feel equally valued and respected**

##### **5.1 Activities: Continue to encourage and welcome increasing numbers of job applications from candidates with disabilities, who are care leavers, and from the Armed Forces community**

- Continue to encourage and welcome job applications from disabled candidates using the Disability Confident Scheme (current accreditation runs until October 2025), which guarantees disabled applicants who meet the minimum job criteria an interview.
- Provide support and opportunities to ex-military and reservists, as holders of the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award
- Provide training and employment opportunities to Borough care leavers in our capacity as Corporate Parent

##### **5.2 Activities: Seek to understand the needs of employees with protected characteristics through engagement with employee networks and data gathering through staff surveys and personal diversity records**

- Continue to support the Council's organisational intelligence capability in relation to protected characteristics data through the update of records of existing employee (which recently saw an 89% response rate) and through information collected about protected characteristics from job applicants as part of the Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- Improve the number of staff who provide information about their ethnicity and religion. The workforce profile for 21/22 identified that there has been a slight increase in the number of staff who prefer not to provide this information.
- Continue to work with the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff network to promote a culture of inclusion and to develop wellbeing support relevant to our workforce.

##### **5.3 Activities: Deliver a range of measures to improve opportunities for those who want to combine work with family or caring responsibilities**

- Continue to offer a wide range of flexible working options including a flexi-time scheme, part-time working, term-time only working, nine-day fortnights, remote working, and flexible retirement. Since March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the majority of the workforce working from home and therefore flexibility and employee wellbeing has been at the forefront of supporting all our staff but particularly those with caring responsibilities.
- Continue to support employees who are Foster Carers through additional paid leave and to support families with military connections as an employer holding a Gold Award of the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Maintain the 'family friendly' policies which are part of the Members Allowances scheme, including a Dependants' Carer's Allowance, and maternity, adoption and paternity leave.

**5.4 Activities: Explore the use of Reverse Mentoring as a means of promoting awareness of diversity and equality issues among senior management**

- Work with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff network to scope the feasibility of a Reverse Mentoring programme, as a mechanism to increase awareness of and accountability for equalities issues among senior RBWM leadership.