

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access & Performance)

Report to Executive Board

Date: 7 November 2012

Subject: Making Leeds an LGBT friendly city

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report provides an update for members on work undertaken following the white paper motion considered by Members of Full Council on 28 March 2012 and outlines proposals for further work to be undertaken which will support work to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City.
2. Between April and August 2012 a series of meetings and discussions have taken place with a wide range of individuals, organisations and support groups. The purpose of these meetings and discussions was to gauge current levels of work that takes place and to start to understand current perceptions that the LGBT community have of the city and to consider what further work could take place that will help to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City.
3. As a result a range of proposals have been identified that will build on the work that is already taking place across the city that recognises the contribution that the LGBT community make to the city's success.

Recommendations

Members of Executive Board are recommended to agree in principle to the proposal identified in this report which will support work to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 It updates members on work undertaken following the white paper motion considered by Members of Full Council on 28 March 2012 and outlines proposals for further work to be undertaken which will support work to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City.
- 1.2 The report identifies a range of proposals that will build on the work that is already taking place across the city that recognises the contribution that the LGBT community make to the city's success.

2 Background information

- 2.1 At a Full Council meeting on 28th March 2012 a White Paper Motion for the designation of a Gay Quarter for Leeds was tabled. The resolution was :-

'That this Council recognises the successful regeneration of Leeds city centre over the past 20 years creating a more attractive and safer environment, leading to substantial job creation.

This Council particularly notes the emergence of businesses catering for Leeds lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in the Lower Briggate area and further notes that for the first time Stonewall has placed the Council in the Top 50 employers in their Workplace Equality Index.

Council believes that recognising the contribution of the LGBT community to the success of Leeds and aiming to be an LGBT friendly city will encourage further investment and the creation of jobs as well as creating a tolerant and safe environment for all in the City Centre and across the whole district.

This Council requests that officers bring a report to the Executive Board detailing how this will be achieved.'

- 2.2 The long term ambition for the City is that Leeds will be the best city in the UK and being a city:
 - that will be fair, open and welcoming.
 - that has an economy that will be prosperous and sustainable.
 - that all Leeds' communities will be successful
- 2.3 Leeds is made up of many people and communities. People from different identities and cultures make up the city and the places in which they live, work and play. Leeds is a city built on migration from near and far, and has benefited economically, culturally and socially from this. Some communities are more visible than others but everyone in the city has influenced its diversity.
- 2.4 In the context of this, work is taking place to achieve these ambitions and to promote co-operation and collaboration between agencies and communities, to help them work together to create the conditions for improved community relations, between and within the diverse communities of Leeds.

- 2.5 We want Leeds to be a city of communities where people feel able to get involved and make decisions, supported by the best council and the best public services in the UK.
- 2.6 Leeds City Council has a leading role in the city to promote equality and value diversity. There is considerable work that has taken place to make equality an integral part of our work and in particular in how we deliver services, how we employ people, how we work with our partners and how we make decisions.
- 2.7 Equality considerations are now an integral part of the decision making process and considerable work has taken place on embedding equality into all aspects of work using the Equality Framework for Local Government. In recognition of these achievements the council undertook a diversity peer assessment in May 2011 and were awarded 'excellent' status against the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 2.8 Specific work on LGBT equality has also been recognised. Leeds City Council was ranked at 37th place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2012. Stonewall's Top 100 Employers is the definitive list of Britain's best gay-friendly employers. This recognises the positive work of the council and its employment practises.
- 2.9 Statistics are not available on the overall size of the LGBT population in Leeds or across the country and this information is unlikely to be available in the near future. Questions on sexual orientation were not asked as part of the Census 2011. Individual organisations, such as the council, will capture some data but it is not a city wide picture.
- 2.10 However, the government estimates indicate that between 5% and 7% of the population are LGBT. It is also estimated that 20 people in every 100,000 are currently transgender and the number is growing (Gender Variance in the UK, GIRES 2009.)
- 2.11 Leeds does, however, have a well established LGBT community. As stated there are no measures nationally or locally, but through the work we undertake with Stonewall they estimate that for a large city like Leeds with an established gay social scene, businesses and support network, at least 10% of the population would likely identify themselves as LGB. (Stonewall do not include Transgender in their work.)
- 2.12 LGBT people still continue to suffer from harassment and discrimination and there are still some very negative stereotypes and barriers that this community face. There is a wide range of research undertaken by organisations such as Stonewall which recognises the issues and provides guidance and advice on how to tackle such matters.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Between April and August 2012 a series of meetings and discussions have taken place with a wide range of individuals, organisations and support groups. These included individual members from the LGBT community, organisations that provide

specific support services, community forums and groups, council services and partner agencies. This covered a breadth of knowledge and experience and included:

- Staff networks from Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, Asda, University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University
- Community organisations – VAL, Mesmac, Age UK Leeds
- Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Libraries, Arts and Heritage, City Centre Management
- West Yorkshire Police, Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust, University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, NHS Leeds.

- 3.2 These meetings and discussions were supplemented with some desk top research.
- 3.3 The purpose of these meetings and discussions was to gauge current levels of work that takes place and to start to understand current perceptions that the LGBT community have of the city and to consider what further work could take place that will help to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City.
- 3.4 The majority of participants welcomed the approach being proposed by the council and felt that any additional work would be seen as positive and would build on their view that Leeds had a reputation of a safe and friendly city and to raise the profile of the LGBT community in Leeds. They are also very keen to be involved with and support any proposed work as we move forward.
- 3.5 There is also a view that there is not always evidence in council publications and events of the size of community and the contribution they make to the city which adds to the perception that they can, at times, feel like an invisible community
- 3.6 One of the key messages that participants were keen to get across was that they are not a homogenous community or geographical community and any proposals should reflect that. Also transgender people do not necessarily identify as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual so some of the work that takes place in the city does not always include transgender issues. Transgender people will have some issues in common with LGB people, particularly in relation to discrimination.
- 3.7 However, there was a general consensus that this was a good opportunity to raise the profile of the LGBT community as a whole but also to reinforce the principles of inclusiveness and to change and challenge perceptions and stereotypes which would also have positive impacts on other communities.
- 3.8 Many LGBT people have children and families and wish to feel comfortable with them in more child centred environments and wish to socialise away from the bar scene.

- 3.9 The outcome of the discussions to date have identified the need for a range of activities which reflect the diversity of the community and its needs and seek to support the ambition of Leeds LGBT Friendly City. These proposals have been grouped by themes.
- 3.10 Some of the proposals are for new projects but the majority of proposals are to revisit existing provision. This will improve current service provision, ensure existing resources are better utilised, build on what we already do and make sure that services are more inclusive to everybody.
- 3.11 The proposals supporting our aim to be an LGBT friendly city are summarised below. More detail on each is included in the attached appendix. These proposals do not include information on costs and specific work will need to be undertaken as part of any project implementation.
- 3.11.1 **Leeds Gay Quarter** - It is recognised that the Lower Briggate and Calls area of the city centre is unofficially known as the 'gay area'. Initial discussions have taken place with the City Centre Partnership Board and some representatives of the commercial premise owners that work in that area about developing proposals for an official Gay Quarter. A fact finding visit took place to Liverpool earlier this year to look at and learn from similar work they undertook in 2011. A Working Group led by City Centre Management with support from Equality and Community Safety will now be set up to look further at this proposal.
- 3.11.2 **Pride** - Leeds Pride is now in its 7th year. Leeds City Council has supported Pride and it is seen as one of the highlights of the city's cultural calendar and gives an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of the LGBT community to the city. It has been agreed that the council will work with the Leeds Pride Steering Group to look at improving partnership work for Leeds Pride 2013 and beyond.
- 3.11.3 **Resource Centre** - The council's LGBT Hub (involvement forum for members of the LGBT community) have identified that one of their priorities is the development of a dedicated LGBT resource centre. This is a piece of work that is being developed in partnership with Third Sector organisations and Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust.
- 3.11.4 **Older People** - A framework of principles for organisations that work with older people in Leeds 2012 – 2016 has been produced. The 'Time of our Lives' programme will not only improve services for older people in Leeds, it will also work to change attitudes towards ageing; allowing ageing to be seen as a positive experience and emphasising the contribution that older people make in society. Initial discussions have taken place with Adult Social Care and it is proposed that they revisit the guide produced in 2010 to ensure that the recommendations for best practise have been implemented.
- 3.11.5 **Children and Young People** - Stonewall have carried out research which shows that homophobic bullying is endemic in Britain's schools. They recognise that local authorities play a key role in addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying. Positive work is being progressed with colleagues in Children's Services to respond to this and other related LGBT challenges for children and young people.

- 3.11.6 **Community Safety/Hate Crime** - The Hate Crime Policy and reporting process has recently been reviewed. The outcome of the revised changes has been to have clearer reporting framework that recognises individual agencies' ability to provide an initial response but one which ensures all reports are logged centrally with the Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team and, wherever appropriate, to provide a joined up response. It is proposed that a project group is set up with members of the LGBT community to work with community safety colleagues to support training on homophobia and transphobic hate crime and the identification of appropriate third party reporting centres.
- 3.11.7 **Culture** - Many participants raised the issue of LGBT cultural events and activities. It is widely recognised that the city provides lots of cultural opportunities already but would like to have some that are focused on their particular community. Libraries, Arts and Events are keen to ensure that cultural events for the city are inclusive and welcome the initial proposal to work with members of the LGBT community to develop some of these proposals further.
- 3.11.8 **Leisure and sport** - This is an area where a wide range of activity has already taken place. It is widely recognised that there are still issues around stereotyping in sport and there has been some recent publicity about homophobia in sport, particularly, football. This is being addressed by organisations, such as, Rugby Football League who have produced guidance on challenging homophobic abuse and behaviour and they have recently done a joint campaign with Leeds Rhinos. This is a positive endorsement for the Rugby League World Cup 2013 which is being hosted in Leeds.
- 3.11.9 **Housing** - Common housing problems faced by LGBT people include homophobic harassment in and around the home, homelessness caused by family rejection, shared housing with homophobic/transphobic individuals, the vulnerability of LGB homeless people and those in insecure housing and the poor quality of housing service provision. The majority of these issues are addressed through current provision in the city. However, it is proposed that it would be useful to undertake a review of local practice to ensure that it is still relevant and to it is also proposed Housing Services undertake some work takes place to understand the issues locally of young LGBT people who may become homeless - they are thrown out of their home or decide to leave home to escape homophobia.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Members of the LGBT community or organisations that provide services to them have been involved with developing and shaping proposals. This has included Mesmac, Leeds Pride, LGBT Staff networks from the council, University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, ASDA, Age UK Leeds, VAL. Relevant stakeholders will continue to be engaged in the process and appropriate consultation will take place for individual projects.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Due regard to equality has been considered in the development of these proposals. The proposals in this report will clearly promote equality and will support work to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City. It was not appropriate to screen the proposals outlined in this report. Individual projects and further pieces of work will be subject to screening or an equality impact assessment when appropriate.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The proposed work will help with the city ambition that Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming and in particular to be the best city for communities.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report at this time. There are likely to be resource implications for some of the project proposals in appendix 1 which at this stage have not been costed. The implementation of proposals with costs will be brought separately for approval.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 This report does not contain any confidential or exempted information and is subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Without the work identified in this report there could be risks that the council and the city do not understand or meet the needs of the LGBT community. This could result in them feeling marginalised, services not being targeted appropriately and reaching the right people and the potential for an increase in tension targeted at the LGBT community. We work very closely with the LGBT community and the positive actions outlined in this report help to manage and mitigate this risk.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Leeds has an ambition that it will be the best city in the UK. Social and economic research is starting to highlight the benefits that can be achieved by places that are more diverse and accept difference. This research states that the benefits of technology, talent and creativity and tolerance are crucial to economic success. Respecting difference and embracing diversity isn't just the right thing to do it also has economic benefits.
- 5.2 The proposals in this report will help to raise the profile and recognition of the contribution the LGBT community make to the success of Leeds and an aim to be an LGBT friendly city will likely encourage further investment and the creation of jobs as well as creating a tolerant and safe environment for all in the City Centre and across the whole district.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to agree in principle to the proposals identified in this report which will support work to make Leeds an LGBT Friendly City.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no Background Documents associated with this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Detailed Proposals

1 Leeds Gay Quarter

- 1.1 It is recognised that the Lower Briggate and Calls area of the city centre is unofficially known as the 'gay area'. Initial discussions have taken place with the City Centre Partnership Board and some representatives of the commercial premise owners that work in that area about developing proposals for an official Gay Quarter. A fact finding visit took place to Liverpool earlier this year to look at and learn from similar work they undertook in 2011.
- 1.2 Following this visit and the resolution at Full Council it was agreed that further work on the Gay Quarter should be considered as part of the wider work on Leeds LGBT Friendly City. It is, therefore, proposed that an appropriate approach to take this work forward is developed in conjunction with the LGBT community and key partners. A Working Group led by City Centre Management with support from Equality and Community Safety will now be set up to look further at this proposal. This will take into account feedback from the interviews that have taken place and cost implications which will include consultation, branding and identity, street signage and design and community safety issues.
- 1.3 Initial discussions also took place with the retail association and the hotels association about how this work could relate to the wider issue of Leeds as a destination of choice for visitors. There is some publicity already available on the Visit Leeds website and a Gay Leeds map has already been produced. Further discussions will take place with Marketing Leeds to progress this.
- 1.4 One of the main challenges will be the question of what will success look like. There are a range of activities and projects that are proposed that will improve individual service provision. Measures can be put in place to understand increased customer satisfaction. It is proposed that we should use the opportunities of social media to profile the positive work being undertaken and to use this to help gauge satisfaction. In addition, relevant information and signposting will be developed for the council's website which will use positive imagery, such as, the rainbow flag or the Stonewall logo.

2 Pride

- 2.1 Leeds Pride is now in its 7th year. Leeds City Council has supported Pride and it is seen as one of the highlights of the city's cultural calendar and gives an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of the LGBT community to the city.
- 2.2 Leeds Pride Steering Group state that it attracts around 23,000 people to Leeds and an estimated £1.5 million into the city's economy and is the UK's friendliest Pride event.
- 2.3 It has been agreed that the council will work with the Leeds Pride Steering Group to look at improving partnership work for Leeds Pride 2013 and beyond. This work will be led by the Head of Equality and will include issues around sponsorship, funding

applications and support from the council and other associated costs, such as, Traffic Regulation Orders.

3 Resource Centre

- 3.1 The council's LGBT Hub (involvement forum for members of the LGBT community) have identified that one of their priorities is the development of a dedicated LGBT resource centre. This is a piece of work that is being developed in partnership with Third Sector organisations and Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust.
- 3.2 Campaigners for this centre feel that there are plenty of social venues for LGBT people, but no community space. They are advocating that a centre would help people to build a sense of safety and belonging. They felt that there were LGBT people in all walks of life who may have little in common, but may have unique needs. There are increasing demands for other services like retirement homes and healthcare. Isolation was a particular problem among older LGBT people and in all age groups there were higher rates of suicide and self harm.
- 3.3 In 2010 a report called Closing the Gap, about how those issues affected LGBT communities in Leeds, also said there was a need for a focal point in the city to build a sense of community, an opportunity for socialising outside of bars and clubs, and which could provide information about services and promote wellbeing.
- 3.4 A consultation event was held in February 2012 and a Steering Group has been set up. This includes members of the LGBT Hub, Third Sector and health providers. They are currently looking at what options could be considered and this will be discussed at a future meeting of the LGBT Hub.

4 Older People

- 4.1 A framework of principles for organisations that work with older people in Leeds 2012 – 2016 has been produced. The 'Time of our Lives' programme will not only improve services for older people in Leeds, it will also work to change attitudes towards ageing; allowing ageing to be seen as a positive experience and emphasising the contribution that older people make in society.
- 4.2 This work recognises that certain groups of older people are more likely to be vulnerable to disadvantage than others. This includes lesbian, gay and bisexual older people. Adult Social Care supported the production of a guide for people and organisations working with older lesbians, gay and bisexual people in 2010. A perspective paper on ageing lesbians, gay men and bisexuals produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in January 2012 reinforced the need for best practise for social care services to this community.
- 4.3 Initial discussions have taken place with Adult Social Care and it is proposed that they revisit the guide produced in 2010 to ensure that the recommendations for best practise have been implemented.

5 Children and Young People

- 5.1 Stonewall have carried out research which shows that homophobic bullying is endemic in Britain's schools. They recognise that local authorities play a key role in addressing homophobia and homophobic bullying.
- 5.2 A focus group held with young LGB people in Leeds reinforced that homophobic bullying is an issue in some Leeds schools. They felt there was a need for a culture shift in schools to pick up all forms of harassment and discrimination, relationship education still only focusing on heterosexual relationships, teacher's awareness of homophobia and knowledge of support services available for young LGB people, positive imagery in schools.
- 5.3 A wide range of work has taken place at a local level to address the wider issues of bullying and to promote inclusion and race equality. The Stephen Lawrence Education Standard (SLES) is unique to Leeds and is awarded to schools, early year's centres and colleges which demonstrate knowledge, understanding and evidence of promoting inclusion and race equality to help transform education. Around 77 per cent of Leeds' 263 schools have already achieved the award, with many more working towards it.
- 5.4 Children's Services are already considering work to refresh the SLES so that it continues to support and embed good practice in race equality in schools and settings in light of many national changes such as the Equality Act 2010, New Ofsted Framework 2012, as well as, of course, the changing role of LAs. It is proposed that this also considers the benefits of the Stonewall Education Equality Index which is a comprehensive annual benchmarking exercise for local authorities, showcasing how well they are tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in their schools. This would compliment the council wide work for the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- 5.5 There is also a need to include bullying which occurs because some children and young people have same sex parents.
- 5.6 It is also proposed that work is undertaken with other council services for children and young people where we may be able to provide appropriate information on sexual orientation in appropriate formats and environments. This could include Breeze and Healthy Schools.
- 5.7 A particular issue arose around fostering and adoption for same sex parents. Work in this area is well established. Children's Services have targeted work with this community previously and welcome the opportunity to revisit this. It is proposed that future work to increase the numbers of applications for fostering and adoption will include networking opportunities with same sex couples who have previously been through the process and to consider producing some specific publicity using case studies. This approach will also be used to target other communities to increase their interest and applications, particularly, BME communities.
- 5.8 These proposals will be tied into all current work that is taking place on Leeds a Child Friendly City.

6 Community Safety/Hate Crime

- 6.1 The Hate Crime Policy and reporting process has recently been reviewed. The outcome of the revised changes has been to have clearer reporting framework that recognises individual agencies' ability to provide an initial response but one which ensures all reports are logged centrally with the Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team and, wherever appropriate, to provide a joined up response.
- 6.2 Part of the review has been to increase awareness of hate crime and to review third party reporting centres.
- 6.3 It is proposed that a project group is set up with members of the LGBT community to work with community safety colleagues to support training on homophobia and transphobic hate crime and the identification of appropriate third party reporting centres.

7 Culture

- 7.1 Many participants raised the issue of LGBT cultural events and activities. It is widely recognised that the city provides lots of cultural opportunities already but would like to have some that are focused on their particular community.
- 7.2 Examples of current events that celebrate the LGBT community are Leeds Pride and LGBT history. Suggestions have been made on how some of these could be improved and this includes LGBT strand for the international film festival, family focused activity at libraries and museums during Leeds Pride and LGBT history month and relevant literature in libraries.
- 7.3 Libraries, Arts and Events are keen to ensure that cultural events for the city are inclusive and welcome the initial proposal to work with members of the LGBT community to develop some of these proposals further.

8 Leisure and sport

- 8.1 This is an area where a wide range of activity has already taken place. It is widely recognised that there are still issues around stereotyping in sport and there has been some recent publicity about homophobia in sport, particularly, football. This is being addressed by organisations, such as, Rugby Football League who have produced guidance on challenging homophobic abuse and behaviour and they have recently done a joint campaign with Leeds Rhinos. This is a positive endorsement for the Rugby League World Cup 2013 which is being hosted in Leeds.
- 8.2 Sport and Active Recreation have already been pro-active in trying to positively address some of the key issues around leisure and sport and the LGBT community. This has included staff awareness of issues that were specific to their service and they produced of Transgender Policy for their service. The intention is that this service will not undertake any additional activity but will continue to build on the good work they already carry out in this area.

9 Housing

- 9.1 Common housing problems faced by LGBT people included homophobic harassment in and around the home, homelessness caused by family rejection, shared housing with homophobic/transphobic individuals, the vulnerability of LGB homeless people and those in insecure housing and the poor quality of housing service provision. The majority of these issues are addressed through current provision in the city.

- 9.2 However, it is proposed that it would be useful to undertake a review of local practice to ensure that it is still relevant and to it is also proposed Housing Services undertake some work takes place to understand the issues locally of young LGBT people who may become homeless - they are thrown out of their home or decide to leave home to escape homophobia.