

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Follow Up

Date: 27 March 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Scrutiny Board Strategy & Resources has received a number of reports on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) dating back to 2020.

The work of the Board has mirrored ongoing work on EDI being undertaken corporately linked to the Council's organisational values and behaviours which are aimed at helping everyone to be their best in the workplace and the commitment to treat people fairly.

The Board's interest in EDI has evolved to also include receiving direct feedback from the Council's staff networks to hear about their lived experiences working for the Council. This led to reports being brought to the Board in January and December 2022 through which the networks were able to focus on challenges, successes and the future in respect of their areas of focus.

The December 2022 report contained a key focus on the journey being undertaken corporately by the Council to improve the approach to EDI by the Council. This item presents a follow up to that aspect of the report and should enable board members to focus on the corporate approach to EDI that has seen significant work and progress in recent years.

Recommendations

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- a) Note the progress and ongoing work on equality, diversity and inclusion and the focus on embedding EDI within the council's values and behaviours.
- b) Identify any further scrutiny actions that could arise following consideration of this report.

What is this report about?

- 1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as an organisational priority has been given a clear focus in 2022/23 both in terms of resources and the development of a clear plan to continue development and progress in this area. Since January 2022, a concerted effort has been made to bring about positive change on this agenda for the organisation, across workforce and organisational priorities.
- 2 At the December 2022 meeting of the Board a report was brought setting out the Council's corporate approach to EDI and to highlight recent developments in this area, included as Appendix 1 to this report. This included developing and setting out a vision for EDI, establishment of five workforce priorities and actions to take those forward, work on recruitment and initial welcome of new staff, training for staff and managers, development of zero tolerance approaches, staff progression, appointment of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and enhanced use of data and monitoring to evidence the impact of the organisation's efforts on EDI. The minute for this item are available [here](#) at minute 66).
- 3 In addition, three staff networks also made presentations on their ongoing priorities and challenges. Due to the size of the agenda item, there was limited time for full consideration of the Council's corporate approach to EDI and this has resulted in this item being brought back for further consideration to enable additional questions and discussion from Board members on a key area of work from this and previous municipal years.
- 4 All of the Council's staff networks have now attended the Board meeting and taken the opportunity to provide feedback on progress, challenges and future priorities and to pass on their lived experiences in working for the Council. This has included the Race Equality, Dawn, Carers, Women's Voice, Early Careers, LGBT+ and Healthy Minds networks.
- 5 Appendix 1 to this report provides the December 2022 report for background information. A presentation will be made at the meeting from HR providing additional information and context on the Council's EDI approach and future ambitions.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 6 This item will allow further scrutiny of the Council's approach to EDI and follow up on an agenda item considered at the December 2022 meeting. Furthermore, following the Corporate Peer Challenge of Leeds City Council and subsequent consideration of the issue at Scrutiny in February this will enable the Board to continue to focus on the recommendations made in the Peer Challenge. In terms of EDI the Peer Challenge focussed on; 'Build on the success of the EDI champions network and strengthen corporate champions at the senior level to support the further development and embedding of EDI in the Council.'
- 7 Scrutiny has been considering the EDI agenda for approaching 3 years and has already added value by emphasising that the term 'BAME' is no longer appropriate terminology and should cease to be used by the Council and partners. It is hoped that additional consideration by Scrutiny will add further value to the approach taken by the Council on this agenda.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 8 Ensuring that staff from all backgrounds are treated fairly is a key and ongoing ambition of the Council. Having a content and productive workforce where staff feel valued and can bring their whole selves to work will contribute to the Council's approach to the Best City Ambition and the three pillars.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

9 Consultation and engagement are ongoing with the Chief Executive, CLT and Council Leader in terms of development of EDI activity.

What are the resource implications?

10 There are no specific resource implications contained in this report.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

11 This report has no specific risk management implications.

What are the legal implications?

12 This report has no specific legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

13 Consideration was given to holding a private working group to enable further consideration of this issue by way of follow up to the December 2022 agenda item. On balance and given existing diary commitments bringing this to a formal meeting of the Board was considered to be the best option.

How will success be measured?

14 EDI is a collective council ambition that is a priority for development and progression across the authority as a whole.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

15 Not applicable

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update and Staff Networks – report considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board on 12 December 2022.

Background papers

- None