

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023 – 2024

Date: 24th July 2024

Report of: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment and Director of Strategy and Resources

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- The Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 - 2025 were approved by Executive Board in July 2021. Executive Board also requested that they receive annual reports on progress.
- The council's Executive Board approved a new Vision and Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in February 2023 and a first full year update on progress against the 15 high level priorities in the action plan are included alongside the annual update against our Equality Improvement Priorities.
- The council's Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 - 2025 were produced to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. These continue to recognise poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. A new priority on Health and Wellbeing focused on Carers is proposed to replace the existing priority focused on tackling the impacts of Covid 19.
- They also consider tackling poverty and reducing inequalities with the City's Inclusive Growth Strategy, Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Climate Emergency declaration as key drivers and locality working as a core principle and will help to hardwire the council's approach to improving equality and tackling inequality for the city.
- This report and the accompanying appendices contain information on:
 - A summary of work undertaken to deliver LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2018-2023 and proposals for a refreshed approach for 2024-29
 - A refresh of the councils Equality Assembly Terms of reference strengthening the community leadership provided by 'Hub Representatives as well as strengthening the focus on carers and children and young people.
 - The updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy incorporating Care Experienced people as a local protected characteristic.
 - A refreshed Zero Tolerance Statement
 - The conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Report 23/24– Leeds City Council Workforce EDI

Recommendations

The Executive Board recommendations are to:

- a) Approve the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023 – 2024 (appendix 1)
- b) Approve the adoption of the LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds approach for 2024/29 (appendix 2)
- c) Approve the refreshed approach to the Equality Assembly (appendix 3)
- d) Adopt the new Equality Improvement Priority related to Leeds being a Carer Friendly City to replace the previous priority on responding to the impacts of Covid 19 (appendix 4).
- e) Approve the updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to include Care Experienced as a local protected characteristic (appendix 5)
- f) Approve the refreshed Zero Tolerance Statement (appendix 6)
- g) Consider the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Report 23/24– Leeds City Council Workforce EDI (appendix 7)
- h) Note that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is responsible for the implementation of decisions made by Executive Board in respect of this report appendices 1-5.
- i) Note that the Director of Strategy and Resources is responsible for the implementation of decisions made by Executive Board in respect of this report appendices 6-7

What is this report about?

- 1 The production of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010 with regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty to report annually against our Equality Improvement Priorities (EIP).
- 2 The council's EIP have considered the protected characteristics as required by equality legislation. They also recognise poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. As a result, priorities have been included that address poverty as the council recognises that several of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.
- 3 Appendix 1 shows progress against each priority over the previous 12 months as well as progress against the new Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan high level actions. It also outlines work that is currently planned to be undertaken over the remaining 1 year of the cycle of the priorities. In July 2025, as well as reporting on the final year of the existing cycle, we will be submitting new priorities for the years 2025-29.
- 4 The current EIP “review and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on communities and communities of interest with a focus on health inequalities” was designed to address that COVID-19 disproportionately impacted those experiencing the greatest inequalities and with protected characteristics. The learning from the COVID-19 pandemic has been incorporated into service delivery, especially where services focus on engaging with, and reaching into, diverse communities at risk of experiencing significant health inequalities. This is now a business as usual approach.
- 5 A new priority is being proposed: “To reduce the negative impact on quality of life and wellbeing experienced by carers by due to their caring role by making Leeds a Carer Friendly City, which recognises and values the contribution of carers and support of carers and puts them at the heart of decision making”. This is attached as appendix 4.
- 6 Appendix 2 gives an update on progress against the councils LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2018-23 approach and outlines refreshed proposals for 2024-29.

- 7 The councils Equality Assembly has been in place since 2009-10 and appendix 3 proposes a reviewed and updated terms of reference and addresses plans for strengthening the hub representatives network who lead the Hubs as well as focusing on strengthening the voices of children and young people and carers.
- 8 This is an important statement that builds on previous communications and emphasises the behaviours we can all expect of each other at work, as well as potential consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- 9 Scrutiny Board Strategy & Resources has received a number of reports on the Council's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) dating back to municipal year 2020/21. The aim of this was to provide check and challenge on the ongoing work on EDI 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.
- 10 As part of the Board's work in this area direct feedback has been sought and received 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 2022, December 2022 and February 2024 with supporting evidence submitted by the networks at those board meetings.
- 11 Following the February 2024 report the Board drafted a scrutiny statement setting out six recommendations on the Council's approach to workforce EDI which was approved at its final meeting of the municipal year on 25 March 2024. The statement asked the Executive Board to consider the conclusions of the Scrutiny Board's work on EDI and in line with Procedure Rules, the Executive was asked to provide a response indicating what action (if any) it proposes to take and to publish its response to the statement. Appendix 7 to this report provides the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board statement for any comment the Executive may wish to make. Appendix 10 provides an update on the work of the staff networks in 2024.
- 12 Appendix 8 provides information from the Census 2021 relating to the protected characteristics.
- 13 Appendix 9 is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan

What impact will this proposal have?

- 14 Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities is fundamental to the Best City Ambition.
- 15 The Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 – 2025 ensure the council continues to meet its legal duties but more importantly improves equality outcomes and tackles the barriers to poverty and disadvantage for the citizens of Leeds.
- 16 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan (appendix 9) supports the councils Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality Improvement Priorities against the three identified strands of People and Communities, Service Delivery through the Council, and Workforce - The Council as an Employer.
- 17 Work on LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds will further our service delivery strand ambitions. The review of the councils Equality Assembly will strengthen our citizen engagement with protected characteristic groups and the communities strand of the EDI Vision and Action Plan.

18 The updated Zero Tolerance statement and scrutiny board recommendations strengthen our approach to workforce Equality, diversity and Inclusion.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

19 The Equality Improvement Priorities are an integral part of the Best City Ambition and help to underpin the ambition for Leeds to be the best city in the UK, compassionate and caring with a strong economy which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities. See appendix one for updates on improvement work around the three pillars at pages 15, 41 and 28 respectively.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

20 This report provides a progress update on the Equality Improvement Priorities and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Extensive public consultation on the Best City Priorities and budget setting has been used to inform the Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities. Service specific consultations have taken place to inform the new priorities. Consultation on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan took place in Spring and Summer 2022.

What are the resource implications?

21 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

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

22 Any risks associated with specific priorities would be addressed as part of service delivery. The risk to the council in not developing equality priorities and/or not publishing an annual progress report is that we will be in breach of the Equality Act 2010 which could result in reputational impact and possible financial implications.

What are the legal implications?

23 The production of the Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report and production of equality objectives at least every four years ensures the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

24 No other options were considered.

How will success be measured?

25 Each of the Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities have their own indicators and measures. These are reported annually to Executive Board.

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

26 Work to deliver the Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities takes place throughout the year and an update on these can be found at appendix 1. Responsibility for the delivery of the

priorities, alongside the People and Communities, and Service Delivery sections of the EDI Vision and Action Plan sits with the Director for Communities, Housing and Environment.

27 Responsibility for the delivery of the Workforce - The Council as an Employer section of the EDI Vision and Action Plan, alongside the facilitation of staff networks, sits with the Director for Strategy and Resources.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023– 2024.
- Appendix 2 – LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2024-29
- Appendix 3 – Equality Assembly Review
- Appendix 4 – New Equality Improvement Priority – A Carer Friendly City
- Appendix 5 – Equality Policy 2024-27
- Appendix 6 – Refreshed Zero Tolerance Statement
- Appendix 7 - Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Report 23/24– Leeds City Council Workforce EDI
- Appendix 8 – Census 2021 EDI Overview
- Appendix 9 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan
- Appendix 10 – Staff Networks Update 2024

Background papers

- None.