

Equality Improvement Priorities Progress Report 2020 – 2021 and Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 - 2025

Date: 21st July 2021

Report of: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The Equality Improvement Priorities 2018 - 2022 were approved by Executive Board in July 2018. Executive Board also requested that they receive annual reports on progress.
- During 2020 the City has had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent work in Leeds has focused on understanding the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality of the COVID-19 pandemic on the City's Communities of Interest and the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- The council's Equality Improvement Priorities 2018 - 2022 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. We have, therefore, included priorities that address poverty as we recognise that a number of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.
- Improving equality outcomes and tackling inequality are inextricably linked and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought this to the fore.
- Executive Board agreed on 18th November 2020 that a new strategic approach to the council's Equality Improvement Priorities is developed for 2021 – 2025. These will take into account the disproportionate and differential impact of COVID-19 on inequality and will be closer aligned to the eight Best City Priorities.
- They also take into 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 hard wire the council's approach to improving equality and tackling inequality into the strategic framework for the Best Council Plan and for the City.
- This report should be read in conjunction with the Annual Corporate Performance Report 2020 - 2021 which is being considered at the same Executive Board meeting. The performance report provides measurable evidence of how the council is performing against the ambitions and priorities as set out in the Best Council Plan.

Recommendations

The Executive Board recommendations are to:

- a) Approve the Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report 2020– 2021;
- b) Approve the new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities for 2021 - 2025;
- c) Approve the refreshed Equality and Diversity Policy 2021; and
- d) 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.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The production of the Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report and production of equality objectives at least every four years ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 2 The council's Equality Improvement Priorities have taken into account 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 were included that address poverty as the council recognises that a number of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.
- 3 The Equality Improvement Priorities recognise that there are currently different outcomes and experiences for different groups and communities and were developed to support the Best Council ambitions of Compassionate City and a Strong Economy and progress is reported against these.
- 4 The new approach to the council's Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed for 2021 – 2025. These will take into account the disproportionate and differential impact of COVID-19 on inequality and will be closer aligned to the eight Best City Priorities.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 5 Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities is fundamental to the Best City and the Best Council Plan and work was already in progress by the council and its partners to address it prior to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.
- 6 Work that has been taking place during 2020 demonstrates that there is a disproportionate or differential impact on inequality due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the City's Communities of Interest/Equality Communities. This work highlights that action needs to be taken to address these social, structural and economic inequalities to ensure that they do not worsen.
- 7 The new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities 2021 – 2025 will ensure the council continues to meet its legal duties but more importantly will improve equality outcomes and tackle the barriers to poverty and disadvantage for the citizens of Leeds.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 8 This report provides a progress update on the Equality Improvement Priorities. Extensive public consultation on the Best City Priorities and budget setting has been used to inform

the new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities. Service specific consultations have taken place to inform the new priorities.

What are the resource implications?

- 9 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

What are the legal implications?

- 10 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.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed

- 11 Any risks associated with specific priorities would be addressed as part of service delivery.
- 12 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.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 13 The Equality Improvement Priorities are an integral part of the Best Council Plan priorities and help to underpin the ambition for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: the best city in the UK: compassionate and caring with a strong economy; which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 14 No other options were considered.

b) How will success be measured?

- 15 Each of the new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities have their own indicators and measures. These will be reported annually to Executive Board.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 16 Work will commence immediately on delivery of the new Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities

Appendices

- 17 Appendix 1 - Equality Improvement Priorities Annual Report 2020– 2021
- 18 Appendix 2 - Strategic Equality Improvement Priorities for 2021 - 2025
- 19 Appendix 3 - Equality and Diversity Policy 2021

Background papers

- 20 None