



Light Diversity Driver

Leeds City Council

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Management summary

A strategic meeting was held on 12th November for Leeds City Council as part of the Fair Play Partnership Diversity Champion project. Elected members and officers attended.

The Diversity Driver instrument was used to examine systematically the extent to which a diversity-aware policy has been implemented to date in *Leeds City Council* and the priorities for further improvements. The Diversity Driver is based on the EFQM Excellence Model and covers the following subjects:

- A. Diversity Objectives- for the organisation and for individuals within it
- B. People – involving everyone within the organisation
- C. Support, innovation and innovation for diversity.
- D. Your organisation as an employer
- E. Your organisation within the community
- F. Your organisation and its customers/clients
- G. Making services accessible
- H. Feedback
- J. The broader picture

The results of the strategic meeting delivered a list of strengths and areas for improvement relating to consideration of the diversity factor in *Leeds City Council*. These strengths and areas for improvement are varied and have a range of weight in future planning.

Further to the areas for improvement that were highlighted, more discussion was held on the question of which should take priority and how to tackle them.

At the end of the strategic session it was agreed that the outcomes would be explored by the working group and an action plan drawn up.

1. Introduction

The goal of this meeting was to use a discussion to gain an understanding of the current state of diversity-awareness in Leeds City Council and possible follow-up activities. The Diversity Driver, an instrument for measuring performance in terms of age-aware policy and practices, was used for this.

This report describes the results of the strategic meeting.

1.1 The Diversity Driver

The Diversity Driver is aimed at measuring diversity within the organisation. This instrument facilitates a systematic examination of what has been done in the organisation to date in terms of diversity. It offers approaches for further improvements. The Driver is based on the EFQM Excellence Model, which is widely used in British and other European organisations as a method of comparing the organisation's own performance against international best practice.

The legal framework in the UK is formed by the Equality Regulations which prohibit discrimination on the basis of the six equality strands, but a diversity-aware policy goes further.

Measures must be taken not because they are prescribed by law but because they make sense, both in business terms and otherwise. The Driver is an aid to taking the most appropriate measures. The instrument contributes to a process of continuous improvement in diversity-aware policy. The idea of continuous improvement is not in itself new. Organisations are always looking for opportunities to improve their performance. The strategy of continuous improvement can be used to measure the organisation's own performance and highlight where a change in approach is required. In this way you can get the best from your employees. The approach of continuous improvement helps with the systematic examination of how successful the organisation is in achieving diversity goals and where there are opportunities for further improvement. Once that process is complete, you have a picture of the strengths. It is possible to continue to build on positive past experiences. It also gives a clear idea of what has still to be done.

2.1 The Diversity Driver - Introduction

The Driver helps with the evaluation of the progress of diversity in the organisation. The instrument is intended for organisations in the public and private sector who first want to know how they stand in terms of diversity before they develop new strategies and action plans. The instrument is also helpful for measuring progress in this area.

The Driver uses the following approach:

1. Define the current state of affairs using an assessment.
2. Define priorities: what are the strengths and weaknesses.
3. Define what needs to be improved: where must improvements be made and what is the priority.
4. Define how to make improvements: how do we approach it – learn from others, use manuals and good examples, carry out a study etc.
5. Approach: define responsibilities and prepare a plan of approach.

2.2 Results of the Diversity Driver:

All participants have completed a Diversity Driver. They are asked to give their perceptions of how diversity appears to them in their role in the organisation. The results are then used to perform an analysis. The strengths and areas for improvement in the HR and organisational policy of Leeds City Council were ascertained in the meeting. The participants agree where the priority should lie in policy developments. The results are always discussed section by section. The discussion is then displayed. Areas for improvement and strengths are discussed and the reasons for the views are explored to clarify what the issues actually are.

2.3 Diversity Objectives

Strengths

- **We have clear diversity objectives and strategies**
- **Some of us are committed to achieving our diversity objectives**

Areas for improvement

- **We have no mechanism for feeding in examples of creative approaches to diversity e.g. youth work and mosque**
- **We need to raise the awareness of diversity and embed the issues in the organisation e.g. team meetings, 'mainstream'**
- **We do not raise the awareness of diversity issues among the elected members and address those members who are unaware**
- **We do not all recognise our positive duty to promote diversity**

2.4 People

Strengths

- None identified

Areas for improvement

- We have no consistent way of tapping into talent – (we do not know who has it) elected members, staff and the community
- Our recruitment and consultation processes may not recognise or attract the talent within the city

2.5 Support, information and innovation

Strengths

- None identified

Areas for improvement

- Staff progression routes are fixed so we lose people who cannot see a way forward
- Our elected members do not reflect the diversity of the city

2.6 Your organisation as an employer

Strengths

- We are beginning to promote an ‘ aspirational culture’
- We have good examples of flexible and home working etc. to promote the needs of individuals
- We have a staff satisfaction survey and action follow from that
- More departments are recognizing staff achievements and making awards
- We have an appraisal system
- We have exit interviews and are being encouraged nationally to use these for councillors

Areas for Improvement

- It is sometimes difficult for elected members to fulfil and reconcile their role and other caring responsibilities
- We do not use the information from exit interviews

2.7 Your organisation within the community

Strengths

- In our work we respond to what people need e.g. play areas
- We seek the views of people who are more ‘invisible’
- We actively support the local community

Areas for improvement

- We need to reach the people we do not know as individuals and groups
- Not everyone seeks the views of the ‘invisible’
- We do not make best use of the learning and development opportunities regarding diversity

2.8 Your organisation and its customers and clients

Strengths

- We are trying to make our products and services accessible

Areas for improvement

- We have examples of lack of thought in dealing with people who have specific needs- e.g. blind people
- The processes and systems do not join up to ensure that individuals are treated in an appropriate way

2.9 Making services accessible

Strengths

- None identified

Areas for improvement

- We need to ensure that our contractors act internally as well as externally in a way that is consistent with our diversity objectives and respect our customers
- We need to find ways of gaining positive feedback as well as constructive feedback and criticism
- We need to improve the physical accessibility of our buildings
- We need to improve the responses of those answering calls in departments to inspire confidence that action will follow
- We need to look at ways of making our public meetings more welcoming and accessible in the widest sense

2.10 Feedback

Strengths

- None identified

Areas for improvement

- We have a limited understanding of diversity issues which makes it difficult to have information to inform our actions
- We could do more to ensure that staff get positive feedback passed on to them

2.11 The broader picture

Strengths

- **We are committed to equality and diversity**
- **We know who is responsible for progressing diversity issues within the organisation**

Areas for improvement

- **We could do more to promote the benefits of diversity in real terms**
- **There are insufficient financial and other resources to achieve our diversity objectives across the whole organisation**

3 Priorities test

Once the participants have defined the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to consideration of the diversity factor in the strategic and operational policy of the organisation they have the opportunity to indicate the priority for tackling the areas for improvement.

3.1 Priorities test

The priorities agreed are these:

- **Not everyone seeks the views of the 'less visible'** 2 votes
- **We need to ensure that our contractors act internally as well as externally in a way that is consistent with our diversity objectives and respect their customers** 2 votes
- **We need to raise the awareness of diversity issues among elected members and address those members who are unaware** 2 votes
- **There are insufficient financial and other resources to achieve our diversity objectives across the whole organisation** 2 votes
- **Our recruitment and consultation processes may not recognise or attract the talent within the city** 1 vote
- **We do not all recognise our positive duty to promote diversity** 1 vote
- **The processes and systems do not join up to ensure that individuals are treated in an appropriate way** 1 vote
- **We do not make use of the learning and development opportunities regarding diversity** 1 vote