

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Our Council Scrutiny Panel

30 June 2021

Report title	Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Approach	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Director of Governance	
Originating service	Equalities	
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Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation for action:

Our Council Scrutiny Panel provides any comments it may have on the proposed approach to the Council's draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the Panel's views on the proposed changes to the Council's updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, in advance of any potential consultation with the community.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Panel received a detailed presentation at its meeting on 20 January 2021 on the work carried out on equalities by the Council.
- 2.2 The Council has made substantial progress in its work on equalities building on a strong position, with the Council previously having achieved excellence in the LGA equality framework for Local Government in October 2018.
- 2.3 The Council is completely committed to ensuring fairness and inclusion throughout its actions both internally and externally and this forms one of the key principles underlining the Relighting the City Plan adopted by the Council in September 2020.
- 2.4 The Council has taken a number of steps throughout the last year, as detailed in paragraph 2.5 and in the attachment at appendix 1 to translate its commitment into outcomes and has throughout ensured that the response to Covid-19 has had equalities at its heart.
- 2.5 As set out in the presentation at Appendix 1 in the last year the Council has done the following:
 - **Internal resources** - Substantially increased the internal resource devoted to the Equality and Diversity team by appointing two additional advisors, a project manager and changing the role of the EDI manager to Head of EDI
 - **Work with the Council's equality forums** - Worked closely with its 4 equality forums (Race, Religion and Belief Forum, Rainbow Forum, Gender and Maternity Forum and Disability and Age Forum) to improve the way equalities is embedded into all aspects of the Council's work taking a co-production approach – doing things in partnership with each forum - listening and acting on their suggestions/comments and regularly meeting with them on progress
 - **Equality monitoring** - Improved the way equalities monitoring takes place across the Council and ensuring transparency on equalities data – whilst recognising that there is more work needed
 - **HR processes including recruitment** - Improved a number of HR processes including ensuring that every single recruitment panel is race and gender diverse and that all grievance/disciplinary and management of attendance panels are also race and gender diverse

- **Culture** – sought to ensure that the culture of the Council is that equalities is at the heart of all work and not an issue that is considered after decisions are reached.
- **Development opportunities** - Introduced additional schemes to support and improve opportunities for those with protected characteristics
- **External charters** - Signed up to key partnerships such as the BITC Race at Work Charter and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
- **Equalities involvement in key discussions** - Ensured that there is representation from each of the equality forums at Senior Officer meetings (Strategic Executive Board – “SEB”) and attendance by senior officers at equality forums, with each forum having a SEB sponsor.

2.6 The actions above are just a short list of the actions that have taken place. The proposed strategy attached at Appendix 1 is intended to build on the actions that have taken place in the last 12 months (and before) and set out a clear and easily understandable set of objectives on equalities.

2.7 This will ensure that the Council continues to meet its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

3.0 Proposed approach

3.1 The proposed approach to the Council’s new draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is set out in appendix 1. The Panel’s comments on this early draft are sought at the meeting. The Panel’s comments will be considered in advance of the formal start of consultation.

3.2 In due course the draft strategy will be consulted on including with a number of voluntary and community sector organisations as well as other public sector partners. Once the results of that consultation process are received they will then be considered carefully, and a final strategy produced and adopted by the Council.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.
[GE/28062021/H]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There is a clear legal duty to comply with the equality duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 - this provides that public authorities are now required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.2 In addition to ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, named on , to publish equality objectives, at least every four years and information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty. The proposed approach will meet those duties.

5.3 There are no other legal implications [DP/28062021/B]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The equalities considerations are detailed in the presentation attached at appendix 1. The key is to ensure that fairness and inclusion are embedded into all actions of the Council both in its internal and external actions and that is the intention of the authority.

7.0 All other Implications

7.1 There are no other implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 Previous reports to the Our Council Scrutiny Panel including meeting on 20 January 2021