

Our Council Scrutiny Panel

17 November 2022

Report title	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy Consultation Phase Two	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield EDI	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	David Pattison – Chief Operating Officer	
Originating service	Equalities	
Accountable employee(s)	Jin Takhar Tel Email	Head of EDI 01902 552904 Jin.Takhar@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet Member Strategic Executive Board Cabinet	4 October 2021 12 October 2021 8 December 2021

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Note the consultation findings
2. Provide feedback or comments on the consultation undertaken to date
3. Note that any feedback provided will be considered and incorporated into the final report for Cabinet

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To invite scrutiny to provide feedback and/or comment on the findings of the phase two consultation.
- 1.2 Feedback and comments will be considered and incorporated into the final EDI strategy document and supporting action plans.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 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 underpinning the Relighting the City Plan adopted by the Council in September 2020.
- 2.2 The Council has made substantial progress in its work on equalities building on a strong position, previously having achieved excellence in the Local Government Association (LGA) equality framework for Local Government in October 2018.
- 2.3 The need for a renewed focus on EDI was highlighted following the murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, the release of disparity reports and Covid-19. Staff equality forum meetings were held in July 2020 where members were consulted on what the priorities of our EDI strategy should be. The following priorities emerged:
 - Visible Leadership and Strong Organisational Culture
 - Inclusive Employer where its workforce is reflective of the City
 - Targeted professional Training and Development
 - Inclusive, Responsive and Accessible Services
- 2.4 Phase one consultation on the strategy was undertaken as detailed in the presentation attached at appendix A slide 3 with key community partners including Black Community Matters, Ethnic Minority Council, Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership WEDP) and Corporate Equality Steering Group (CESG) in 2020 and 2021. Phase one consultations were also held with Equality Advisory Group (EAG) members and Trade Unions on the draft strategy and its four underpinning priorities as above.
- 2.5 Having carried out extensive internal consultation in phase one, it was essential that we engaged the wider community by consulting with a number of voluntary and community sector organisations to better understand service needs across protected characteristics.
- 2.6 The findings of this phase two consultation would then be considered carefully to inform the final strategy.
- 2.7 The Scrutiny Panel received a detailed presentation on the first draft Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy Approach at its meeting on 30 June 2021 which highlighted the proposed approach as indicated above. Scrutiny panel were further informed of phase two consultation planned.

3.0 Progress to date

- 3.1 Phase one consultations were held from July 2020 to May 2021 with members of staff equality forums, key community partners, EAG and Trade Unions.
- 3.2 It was then important to engage the wider community to better understand their needs and aspirations regarding our Council services with particular focus on priority four of the strategy – ‘Inclusive, Responsive and Accessible Services’.
- 3.3 Phase Two consultation commenced on 13 July 2021 with a number of voluntary and community sector organisations being invited to meet to receive an overview of the strategy and priorities and to discuss their own priorities, how they fit into the strategy and any gaps in the draft.

3.4 Phase Two Consultation Methodology

Please refer to appendix A slide 8 for the detailed methodology.

Phase 2 consultation was undertaken through 3 methods:

- Focus groups - 63 community groups targeted
- One to one meetings - 17 meetings held
- Online Survey – 219 respondents

3.5 Consultation Findings

Please refer to appendix A slides 9-14 for the detailed findings.

- 3.6 The majority of groups consulted in phase two were happy with the priorities as set out within the strategy. Several key areas were highlighted for further consideration and actioning:
- **Source Funding** - Council to support community to source funding and write bids
 - **Community Representation** - Council to address under representation of diverse community groups on strategic boards and address workforce representation of teaching professionals within education setting
 - **Education** – Council to review exclusion rates and attainment levels with regard to the disproportionate impact on key sections of the community
 - **Public Health** – Council to review the disproportionate impact of infant mortality amongst black African and Caribbean women and review community safety of women.
 - **Accessibility** - Council to improve access to services for the deaf community, review current BSL offer and video messages on social media platforms
 - **Inclusivity** - To take account of people with hidden disabilities in the current strategy. To tackle the digital inclusion agenda

- **Employment and Skills** – Council to do more to offer targeted mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities to Black African and Caribbean communities and our new established communities (refugees).
- **Adult Social Care** - Council to review support for vulnerable adults who are from ethnic minority backgrounds

While these themes emerged during the consultations, we are pleased to note that the majority had already been identified and addressed within the supporting Directorate Equality Plans (DEPs). Any areas that had not already been incorporated will be, as per our next steps below.

4.0 Questions for Scrutiny to consider

- 4.1 Scrutiny panel to consider and comment on whether appropriate level of consultation has been undertaken to date.
- 4.2 Please note consultation findings will be incorporated into final EDI strategy document and supporting action plans

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 We will look to incorporate all findings into relevant directorate equality plans and further update the EDI strategy to take account of hidden disabilities.
- 5.2 The next steps following the phase two consultations are as below:
 - To revise the strategy to take account of hidden disabilities as indicated in Appendix A slide 12
 - To incorporate the actions into DEPs as indicated in Appendix A slide 16 where appropriate, following discussions with leadership teams – November 2021

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report. [MH/09112021/H]

7.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 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 regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s.149 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.

6.2 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 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will meet those duties.
[TC/08112021/A]

6.3 There are no other legal implications

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 The aim of this strategy is to ensure that fairness and inclusion are embedded into all the functions of the Council and that is the intention of the authority.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 Previous reports to the Our Council Scrutiny Panel including meetings on 20 January 2021 and 30 June 2021.