This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel
13 October 2022

Report title	Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy Update
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield Governance and Equalities
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer
Originating service	Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Accountable employee(s)	Jin Takhar Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion Tel 01902 554650 Email Jin.Takhar@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet Member Briefing 5 October 2022

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel is requested to:

1. To provide comments and feedback on the progress being made in delivering the EDI Strategy 2022 – 2024.

1.0   Purpose

1.1   To provide Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel with an update on progress made in relation to delivering against the Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and supporting action plans.

2.0   Background

2.1   Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) continues to be a key priority and consideration throughout all council activities and organisational culture. Fair and Equal is one of the cross-cutting themes that underpins the Our City: Our Plan. Indeed, the Council has committed to measure it's performance against this topic through the key equalities indicators included in Our City: Our Plan and these are reported to Cabinet and considered by the Scrutiny Board and the relevant scrutiny panels.

2.2   The EDI Strategy (2022 – 2024) was agreed by Cabinet on 19 January 2022 and associated Directorate Equality Plans subsequently launched with overarching priorities and actions agreed.

2.3   In the delivery of the Council's EDI Strategy and supporting directorate equality plans, the Council continues to ensure compliance against the Equality Act 2020 (Public Sector Equality Duty) as well as aligning with best practice and National Standards.

2.4   Outlined within the EDI Strategy we have four key priorities:

a) To demonstrate Visible Leadership and Strong Organisational Culture
b) To be an Inclusive Employer, building a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve
c) Develop an inclusive workplace culture, where targeted professional training, development and support is provided
d) Provide Responsive, Accessible and Inclusive services which actively seek to address inequality, disparities, and exclusions.

2.5   This update will focus on objective one: Visible Leadership and Strong Organisational Culture

3.0   Strategic Executive Sponsors

3.1   Within our Staff Equality Forums we have appointed Strategic Executive Board Sponsors:

- Disability & Age - Charlotte Johns (Director of Strategy)
- Gender Maternity & Paternity - Claire Nye (Director of Finance)
- Rainbow - Ian Fegan (Director of Communications and Visitor Experience)
- Race Religion & Race - David Pattison (Chief Operating Officer)

3.2   They play a key part in our Staff Equality Forums by providing strategic guidance and championing the Forums across the Council

4.0 **Staff Representatives at Strategic Executive Board**

4.1 Each of our Staff Equality Forums (SEF) have representatives who attend Strategic Executive Board (SEB) on a Tuesday afternoon which is where key officer business is discussed.

4.2 This process has been in place for over two years. SEF Representatives have provided positive feedback around the progress the Council has made in relation to recruitment and training and development activities as well as expressing the positive change in organisational culture; SEF representatives have also been empowered to speak up and provide their own diverse opinions and have been listened to.

4.3 Support has also been provided by EDI, the SEB sponsor and Executive Support Team to ensure that the SEF Representatives have the support needed to fully participate in these meetings.

5.0 **Awareness Days / Months**

5.1 EDI have been leading on key awareness days to celebrate our diverse communities.

5.2 Some examples of this are:

- February 2022 – LGBT History Month
- June 2022 – Pride Month
- June 2022 – Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (First Time)
- 18 July 2022 to 17 August 2022 – South Asian Heritage Month
- October 2022 – Black History Month

5.3 These activities have been led by EDI with involvement of Council Staff, other local authorities and local charities and organisations.

5.4 EDI are compiling an EDI Comms Plan to ensure that the Council recognises key diversity dates to celebrate its communities it serves. EDI will be working in collaboration with Communications, Civic Support, and other teams to ensure this is a one city initiative.

6.0 Disability Confident Scheme

6.1 The Council is proud to be a member of the Disability Confident Scheme. This scheme allows us as an organisation to show externally that we are thinking differently about disability and are taking action on how to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities.

6.2 We are currently at Disability Confident Level 2 (Employers). Our aim is to be a Disability Confident Level 3 (Leader)

6.3 EDI are working with Human Resources and the Disability & Age Forum on the self-assessment against the level 3 requirements – this will be validated by a Disability Confident Level 3 Organisation. This will involve us as an organisation to prove that we

are acting as a champion within our workforce and our communities. The self-assessment will be completed by March 2023.

7.0   Social Model of Disability

7.1   One of the key ways that the Disability & Age Staff Equality Forum have influenced the Council is the adoption of the social model of disability.

7.2   The model states that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

7.3   This has been demonstrated by the recommendation to move away from using traditional application forms for recruitment with now adopting the use of CV's. This had been seen as a positive step forward. We are also looking at other ways of recruitment to reduce barriers alongside work to challenge the requirements for qualifications for roles to ensure that this is only where it can be clearly justified.

7.4   We have also introduced the new Autism Awareness Guide – informed and shaped by the forum.   This policy provides guidance for the Council around how to support people with Autism and other neurodivergences, specifically to recruitment – interview stage.

8.0   Gender Maternity and Paternity Forum

8.1   As a result of feedback from the Gender Maternity and Paternity Forum, in the light of events in other parts of the UK, a number of suggestions on precautionary and preventative measures have been put forwards by the forum. These are being put into place by the Council as a responsible employer to increase staff confidence at night/in the dark including issuing Alert Com and Personal Alarms to employees and facilities to ensure that staff can be accompanied to their vehicles/public transport.

8.2   Health and safety site inspections have also been undertaken/completed at all six strengthening families' hubs. As a result, we have improved the street lightning in the surrounding areas and removed shrubbery to address hidden/ overgrown shrubbery.

9.0   Menopause Pledge

9.1   The Menopause Pledge is a series of actions that are recommended by "Wellbeing of Women" this would commit the Council to:

   a) Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need our support
   b) Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause
   c) Actively supporting and informing our employees affected by the menopause

9.2   The Council has already put in place a number of measures to address this including through specific "Menopause In The Workplace" guidance to managers issued by the Human Resources team in 2019. In addition the Council has already introduced

i)   No Offence Age and Menopause eLearning module to improve managers and employee's knowledge

ii) Clear signposting to Wellbeing Support through the NHS, National Institute of Clinical Excellence, Daisy Network and further resources on Menopause and the Law and Menopause Transition

iii) Links to our Employee Assistance Programme which can provide specific tailored support.

9.3   As part of the Menopause pledge there are a number of further actions that are taking place:

i)   Human Resources will be reviewing and relaunching the "Menopause In the Workplace" manager's guidance

ii) Organisational Development will look to appoint 2 x menopause champions to take ownership of the Our People Menopause Support Resource Page

iii) Public Health will undertake an organisational wide menopause survey

iv) Internal communication will be released as part of World Menopause Day (18 October) to highlight the actions that are taking place and to ask for volunteers to form a task and finish group which will assist in developing the action plan following the results of the Public Health Survey.

10.0   Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

10.1   The Council in February 2022 were granted a Silver Award in Stonewall's "Bring Yourself to Work" inaugural awards. This was awarded as part of the Council's submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

10.2   The Council was ranked 160 out of 403 organisations. We were also ranked 23/55 in Government and Regulators Sector, 8/21 of employers headquartered in the West Midlands and 57/126 in employers that operate in the West Midlands

10.3   Feedback and review meeting held with Stonewall to go through the assessment to detail what we as an organisation have done well and where we can improve.

10.4   In terms of our strengths, Stonewall have stated in their feedback that we have a "great structure for our LGBTQ+ network group, including detailed terms of reference which outline the network's objectives and responsibilities". They were impressed by how as a Council we have enabled LGBT+ staff to become change makers within the Rainbow Staff Equality Forum, attending SEB and being part of wider working groups. They were further impressed by our engagement on social media in celebrating key LGBT+ dates.

This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

10.5   Key areas that Stonewall have suggested the Council to focus on include Monitoring, Supply Chains and External Engagement. These are areas of work that are already factored into the EDI strategy as detailed above and an update will be provided on monitoring of equalities data and inclusion of equalities into the procurement process at a future meeting.

10.6   EDI are working with teams across the Council in preparation for submission in October 2023 for the 2024 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

11.0   Birmingham Pride

11.1   On Saturday 24 September staff from City of Wolverhampton Council alongside Wolverhampton Homes were proud to march as part of the Birmingham Pride Parade 2022. This was done under the Rainbow City Banner to showcase our commitment to LGBT+ Inclusion across the city.

11.2   Councillor Ian Brookfield (Leader of the Council), Councillor Paula Brookfield (Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities), Tim Johnson (Chief Executive) and Emma Bennett (Executive Director for Families) were proud to march with staff from the Rainbow Staff Equality Forum. The parade had over 8,000 participants.

11.3   As part of this a new electric van was liveried in a new Rainbow City design. This will be used by the Waste Services Team who are proud to showcase this design across the city.

12.0   Race Equality Code

12.1   The Council has recently adopted the Governance Forums' The Race Equality Code (October). This will involve the Council being independently peer assessed which will take place over the next two months. This performance and accountability framework is designed to provide organisations across all sectors and sizes, the opportunity to address inequality within its governance structures, organisational culture including Senior Leadership Teams.

12.2   The Race Equality Code is based on four principles:

a) Reporting - commitment to be transparent and disclose information and updates on the progress of Race Initiatives
b) Action - a list of measurable actions and outcomes that contribute to and enable a shift in the organisation's approach and success in delivering change
c) Composition - Identifying key indicators that will make a real impact over the long-term, creating tangible different to the existing landscape around race diversity of the board and senior leadership team
d) Education - Developing a robust education framework that develops the ethical and moral reasons behind a programme of development for every organisation.

12.3   A key requirement of adopting the framework involves the submission of key corporate policies and strategies which will be reviewed, senior leadership team will attend facilitated workshops and will be required to complete a detailed survey.

12.4   Following the peer assessment review, the Council will receive a full report setting out our strengths and further provide a set of recommendations that will propose actions we must take, should consider and could implement.

12.5   EDI Team and Strategic Executive Board are working with Dr Karl George MBE (Managing Director of the Governance Forum). The peer review full report will be available by December 2022.

13.0   Business in the Community Race at Work Charter

13.1   The Business in the Community Race At Work Charter is composed of seven key principle calls to action for leaders and organisations across all sectors.

13.2   In summary they are a bold set of principles and actions designed to drive forward a step change in the recruitment and progression of ethnic minority employees.

13.3   The Council in February 2021 signed up to the five calls for action:

i.   **Action 1 to appoint an Executive Sponsor for Race**
David Pattison (Chief Operating Officer) has been appointed as Executive Sponsor for Race Forum and this has led to all Staff Equality Forums now having Executive Sponsors. SEB Sponsors engage and meet with staff forums monthly.

ii.   **Action 2 to capture ethnicity data and publicise progress**
The Council has published in 2022 the first Ethnicity Pay Gap Report and has committed to producing this annually.

iii.   **Action 3 to commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying**
The Council has a clear policy which sets out the Council's commitment to zero tolerance towards   harassment and bullying. The Council has also introduced a safe space scheme which allows employees to reach out to an independent third-party organisation should they wish to report their concerns and/or seek advice. The Council has also revised their disciplinary, grievance and management of attendance policies and procedures to ensure that all disciplinary, grievance and management of attendance review panels are ethnically and gender diverse when making decisions.

iv.   **Action 4 to make equity, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers**
Strong message from Chief Executive and Strategic Executive Board around the importance of EDI being a standing item on all team meetings. Each Directorate has an Equality Plan which shows the steps the Council is taking to tackle service inequality.

v.   **Action 5 to take action that support Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse employee career progression**
The Council has introduced a number of measures to include mentoring and coaching schemes (includes reverse mentoring), wrap around support, "Brilliant Leaders" Programme, "Aspire Into Management" Programme and we have also reviewed and

removed "invisible" barriers such as unnecessary educational requirements on job specifications when experience is seen as sufficient.

13.4   In July 2022 two further calls were added:

i.   **Action 6 to support race inclusion allies in the workplace**
A One City Allyship Approach has been adopted, this encourages all staff to become 'council allies' - their role is to be visible in their support and advocate for EDI. Race Allies are being developed as part of the One City Allyship Approach. We have 13 lead allies at head of service level.

ii.   **Action 7 to include Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse-led enterprise owners in supply chains**
The Council is working with Procurement, Black Business Network, the Asian Business Network and the Women led Business Network in the City to develop training and support for businesses so that they can put themselves forward for procurement opportunities.

14.0   Next Steps

14.1   Scrutiny Panel to receive further reports on progress made against the EDI Strategy, in relation to the strategy key objectives as indicated in section 2.4.

15.0   Finance implications

15.1   There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report. Any financial implications arising from the actions outlined in this report will be funded from existing budgets.
[AS/05102022/Y]

16.0   Legal implications

16.1   There are no direct legal implications associated with the report.
[Legal code DP/05102022/a]

17.0   Equalities implications

17.1   The Council under the Equality Act 2010 has a legal duty to ensure that the authority eliminates unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity & foster good relations. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

17.2   The EDI Strategy is a key example of how the authority is meeting its legal obligations.

18.0   Background Papers

18.1   EDI Strategy https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-05/WCC%201975%20EDI%20Strategy.pdf