

# Briefing Note

**Title:** Equalities Update – Our Journey So Far.

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**Intended  
Audience:**

Internal ☒

Partner organisation ☐

Public ☐

Confidential ☐

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to set out the activity that the Council has taken in relation to delivering against the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and its supporting directorate action plans.
- 1.2 The highlighted directorate action plan will be the HR/OD joint action plan, focusing on Organisational Culture, Recruitment and Training & Development.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is strongly committed to pushing equalities forwards and making sure that it is fully embedded in everything it does.
- 2.2 The Council is fully 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.
- 2.3 The strategy is also fully aligned with the council's corporate plan priorities.
- 2.4 We acknowledge that the Council has a key role to play to promote a fair and more equal society by putting equalities considerations central to the decisions we make about service delivery, contract arrangements and employment.
- 2.5 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. As a result, phase one consultation involved the engagement of the staff equality forums, meetings were held in July – Dec 2020 where employees were consulted on what the priorities of our EDI strategy should be. Phase two consultation (June – September 2021) involved engaging with our residents and key community partners, leaders, and organisations.

**2.6 A number of priorities and actions emerged and have informed the final strategy, which has been presented to Our council Scrutiny Panel 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021, again on 12<sup>th</sup> October and further update received 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Now seeking Cabinet approval 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**

### **3. Progress made to date**

- 3.1 Over the last 18 months, as a Council we have not stood still and have been challenging ourselves in the light of renewed focus on Black Lives Matter and really examining closely what we do. We have been determined that the leadership will not do this based on what they think is best but rather in the form of co-production.
- 3.2 What has the Council done in the last 18 months:
- 3.3 **The presentation attached in appendix one provides a more detailed account of the actions and deliverables achieved to date.**
- 3.4 Below we provide a summary of those actions delivered to date - against the four key objectives /priorities set out within the strategy.
- 3.5 The Council's final Equality Strategy is structured around four key objectives – three are internal, focusing on the organisational culture and leadership, the workforce and organisational development and one which is externally focused, looking at ensuring services continue to remain accessible, inclusive, and responsive.
- 3.6 The Council's Equality Strategy objectives comprise several themes and deliverables and is accompanied by ten directorate equality plans to support positive equality outcomes for employees, service users and residents.
- 3.7 **Priority/Objective One:** Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standards we expect of ourselves and others will look to us as a source of good practice.

Achievements to date:

- Editorial Board established with forum members to ensure shared approach to communications
- Funding for Forums in place to support their work
- One City Leadership pledge in final draft, to be signed off by Lead Allies and Directors– Jan 2022
- Equality forums involved in strategic decision making - at Strategic SEB (Strategic Executive Board) –as from September 2020
- Maintain visible Leadership (SEB) across all equality groups / Staff Forums – SEB attendees at all forums from September 2020 – reporting back to other SEB members on the issues.
- Involve equality groups in all leadership meetings - in progress - now on the agenda for all leadership forums and key that need to show what is being done with it. Including looking at service monitoring and steps to be taken as a result.

- Introduce equalities, diversity and inclusion as a standing item for all leadership meeting agendas – completed – done and expect the leadership teams to report back with what action is being taken.
- Signed up to Business in the Community Race at Work Charter, Stonewall and currently Level 2 in Disability Confidence with aim to submit for Level 3 April 2022

**3.8 Priority/Objective 2:** To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.

Achievements to date:

- New support measures (Safe Space scheme) launched November 2020 in place for all staff, paying reference to protected characteristics
- Disability, Gender and Race Pay Gap Reports analysis produced, and detailed employment data shared with forums and staff
- Recruitment – racially and gender diverse panels for all employment/recruitment in place as from January 2021
- New support measure of Wrap Around Support scheme in place for those employees continually being unsuccessful in securing new opportunities and progression.
- Menu of Options for when advertising – reaching out to community organisations and professionals launched September 2021
- HR Microsite Launched to give a positive front facing page for potential applicants and showcase all items of equalities within CWC Dec 2021
- Grievance and Dignity at work policy has been updated
- DSE and homeworking form co-produced with Health and Safety to include alerts to ICT/Facilities/HR for additional needs and equipment to support staff
- Introduction of policy on Domestic Abuse with mandatory training for managers
- Aggresso diversity information now has restricted access
- Appointment of HR EDI Officer to
- Review of Transgender policy in line with stonewall application

**3.9 Priority/Objective 3:** To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development, where employees from across all equality groups show high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the council as an employer and where colleagues feel confident about being themselves at work.

Achievements to date:

- New mentoring scheme launched November 2020
- New approach to diversity training – four mandatory modules of no offense training, with direct links to Unconscious Bias training
- Management Development Programme launched summer of 2021
- Brilliant Leaders Programme has been delivered twice now and will continue in March 2022
- Aspire into Management Programme launching February 2022
- Executive coaching in place via WM Employers
- Wrap around support launched November 2020

- 3.10 **Priority/Objective 4:** To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Wolverhampton Citizens to realise their potential and to live safely. This includes tackling discrimination and longstanding inequalities that significantly and disproportionately impact on marginalised communities.

Achievements to date:

- New approach in directorates ensuring equalities embedded
- New approach to equalities monitoring data

#### **4 Next Steps**

- Monthly monitoring arrangements in place to track progress made against each Directorate Equality Plan.
- Plans in place to establish a suite of key employment, organisational development, and service delivery performance indicators, which we will provide performance information on equality outcomes and deliverables.
- Three monthly reports will be made available and presented to SEB and Our Council Scrutiny Panel on progress made and deliverables achieved.

#### **5 Recommendations**

- To note the progress made to date.
- To agree to receive 3 monthly reports on the progress made against the EDI Strategy and the ten supporting directorate equality plans.

**Jin Takhar – Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

**Solomon Scott – Race Advisor**

