
Meeting of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee – 8th June 2022

Report of the Chief Executive

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Annual Delivery Plan 2022-23

Purpose

1. To provide members with the annual delivery plan for our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy to enable further consideration and development of the EDI delivery plan over the longer term.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Future Council Scrutiny Committee
 - Consider and comment on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual delivery plan 2022-23
 - Consider the formation of a Working Group comprised of members of this Committee to provide further contribution to the EDI delivery plan and to review progress
 - Endorse the proposal for training on equality, diversity and inclusion matters to be provided to Members of this Committee and available to all Elected Members. This training will be developed in conjunction with the Local Government Association by the EDI team tailored to reflect the Dudley context.

Background

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty, which is known as the General Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the council to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
4. Dudley Council's EDI strategy (2022-25) approved by Cabinet on 24th March 2022 sets out how the council intends to achieve its public duty and confirms our vision for "Putting Equality at the heart of everything we do". It also recognises that to realise our vision we need to advance equality and inclusiveness in all aspects of the Councils work and our responsibilities as:
 - **A service provider** - providing appropriate services that meet the differing needs of our local people regardless of their protected characteristic.

- **The Boroughs largest employer** - ensuring fair recruitment, having a diverse and inclusive workforce, and providing a working environment that is safe, accessible, and free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- **Community leaders** - through our elected members, working with communities and partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to improve quality of life for Dudley Metropolitan Borough residents

5. There are 4 priority themes contained within the EDI strategy which are as follows.

- Understanding our diverse customers and residents
- Demonstrate Inclusive leadership and accountability for delivering EDI outcomes across the organisation.
- Ensuring the integration of equality objectives into the commissioning, procuring and delivery of services.
- An engaged workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve

6. The EDI annual delivery plan 2022-23 identifies the key areas for focus for each of the priority themes within the EDI Strategy and has been referred to this scrutiny committee for further consideration. The EDI delivery plan differs from the EDI strategy in that it identifies detailed actions and enables the council's corporate equalities board to track the progress made against these. This board made up of senior officers from each directorate and chaired by the Chief Executive meets on a monthly basis.

7. The EDI annual delivery plan (2022-23) attached at appendix 1 reflects a range of actions many of which are already in progress. Members are asked to provide any observations, comments, or proposals on the content of the plan and to identify any areas where further information would be beneficial.

Finance

8. Any costs associated with implementing the annual action plan will be met within existing budgets.

Law

9. The Equality Act 2010 provides a comprehensive framework of anti-discrimination legislation. The general public sector equality duty under the Act requires public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Risk Management

10. The EDI strategy 2022 -25 and annual workplan provides mitigation against the risk of the Council failing to deliver our public sector duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Impact

11. The EDI Strategy and annual work plan supports the Council's vision and reflects our values and is intended to go beyond legal compliance to help us achieve our aspirations to put equality at the heart of everything we do.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

12. Successful delivery and implementation of our EDI strategy and action plan is reliant on effective collation, analysis and reporting of equality data via the councils Workforce intelligence function. Equally important is the regular review of relevant people policies, procedures, and practice. They must implement policies and systems that challenge discrimination and stereotypes across all aspects of our work. The work will require a dedicated cultural change programme that will benefit everyone in the Council.

Commercial/Procurement

13. As one of the four themes within the EDI strategy and action plan focuses on procuring and commissioning services, further work is required if we are to achieve the commitment to ensuring equality is reflected in the services we procure and commission.

Council Priorities and Projects

14. The EDI Strategy, and action plan 2022-2023, has a clear link to goal in the borough vision to support "stronger and safer communities". The strategy indirectly supports this, by reducing social isolation in our place of work, through improved people policies and staff networks, creating an environment where it is safe to speak up.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – EDI Annual Delivery plan 2022-23
Appendix 2 – EDI Strategy 2022-25.