Policy and Sustainability Committee

10am, Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Equality and Diversity Framework – March 2024 Update

Executive/routine
Wards

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:

1.1.1 Agrees the third annual progress report against the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework which was approved in April 2021.

1.1.2 Notes that this annual reporting goes beyond the statutory requirement to report progress on a two yearly cycle.

1.1.3 Notes the proposed plan to refresh this work to guide Council actions following the end of the existing framework.

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Report

Equality and Diversity Framework – March 2024 Update

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report provides the third annual overview on delivery of the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework (2021–2025) which was approved in April 2021. The report also provides an overview of the steps to develop the new Equality and Diversity Framework, 2025–2029.

3. Background

3.1 [The Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025](#) was approved by the Policy and Sustainability Committee in April 2021, and contributes to meeting our duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and associated Scottish regulations.

3.2 The framework sets out how we meet our specific duties to:

    3.2.1 gather and consider evidence;

    3.2.2 involve those who share protected characteristics;

    3.2.3 publish equality outcomes;

    3.2.4 mainstream the equality duty;

    3.2.5 undertake impact assessment;

    3.2.6 consider award criteria and conditions in procurement;

    3.2.7 gather and use employee information;

    3.2.8 publish gender pay gap; and

    3.2.9 equal pay statements and publish progress biennially (in a way that is accessible).

3.3 While there is a statutory duty to report on progress with implementation of these duties every two years, the Council has chosen to report on our equality outcomes on an annual basis.

4. Main report

4.1 Activity on delivery of the outcomes identified in the current Equality and Diversity Framework has continued during 2023/2024. Appendix one provides details of the activities carried out, which include:

4.1.1 Work to support families at risk of poverty in Edinburgh through employability, income maximisation and help to manage the rising cost of living. During the latest full year for which data is available Council funded employability programmes supported 696 lone parents, 87 families with a mother under 25; 46 families with a child aged under one year; 157 large families; 1,085 families with a disabled parent; and 1,206 minority ethnic families into work or learning.

4.1.2 Justice Services staff use an individualised approach of assessment to tailor services to meet needs. For example, the Peer Support Service was launched this year to proactively support women who are victims of domestic abuse.

4.1.3 The Travel Service provides transport for eligible Edinburgh based passengers to Scottish prisons to visit their loved ones, overcoming the barriers experienced due to cost, age and/or disability, infirmity, and the challenge of transporting children on multi-stage journeys. Over April to September 2023, 108 people used the service ensuring contact and relationships with family and friends is maintained supporting good mental health and wellbeing as well as being a motivator to desistance.

4.1.4 Community Pantries have also been set up to provide a variety of affordable chilled and fresh foods and support to our most vulnerable citizens across a range of protected characteristics. Over April to September 2023 747 people accessed this support. Monitoring reports demonstrate that this service is positively received, for example "I am claiming Universal Credit, but I am paying off various debts by monthly instalments plus DWP deductions. Anything that helps me make my benefits last is much appreciated."

4.1.5 Our Museums, Galleries Edinburgh Team support the independent Implementation Group which oversees delivery of the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonial Legacy Review Report recommendations. We also continue to embed equality objectives in policy review and ensure our exhibitions and public programme actively feature artists, contributors or themes celebrating the creative contributions of BAME people.

4.1.6 Implementing the 20-minute neighbourhood concept via regeneration, community hubs and design of new schools is supporting community needs to be met locally. Our Corporate Property Strategy complements this with aims to improve the accessibility of Council buildings. Funding is secured and audits of the estate have already begun. The Spatial Design Team are also

working with HR to develop a 'reasonable adjustments requests' process to assist with furniture and adaptations of space.

4.1.7   Digital inclusion has widened access to devices, particularly for children and young people but also for others without access at home. We have introduced a wide range of online services and created a new Intranet External Gateway. Support has also been put in place for those who need to develop digital literacy skills.

4.1.8   The online application form to access social housing aims to reduce barriers, particularly for older people and disabled people. The work has been informed by the Accessible Housing Study and staff are available to support online application, with paper application still available where preferred.

4.1.9   We have supported implementation of the strengthened procedure for preventing and responding to bullying and prejudice amongst children and young people, with a focus on strengthening communication with pupils on how to report incidents and what will happen when incidents are reported and on consistency of recording. We have also created and published a [parent-carer leaflet on bullying and prejudice](#).

4.1.10 Pay gap data analysis, inclusive leadership practice, Active Bystander and other training all contribute to our work to provide an inclusive workplace culture. Joining Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Champions Programme this year will strengthen our work in this area while we continue to explore ways in which we can improve the reporting of prejudiced-based incidents and support our equality staff networks.

4.2   Wider equalities work has taken place alongside delivery of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025. The Officer Equality Working Group and Member Equality Working Group have been established to ensure robust strategic oversight and engagement. A number of relevant motions have been responded to and some of this work will continue into 2024. For example, actions arising from the Gender Recognition, Islamophobia and Pride motions will be mainstreamed into our equalities work programme.

5.   Next Steps

5.1   Progress will continue to be monitored with the final report on the Equality and Diversity Framework to be presented to the Policy and Sustainability in Spring 2025.

5.2   Alongside this, work will be carried out to develop our new Framework required for 2025/29. A key step to inform this process is a mapping exercise currently underway to better understand the equality and diversity landscape across services within the organisation.   Findings of this will be reported to Council in Spring 2024.

5.3   The above work, together with the new Framework development, is being led by the Officer Equality Working Group and will be overseen by the Member Equality

Working Group. Additional resource has been secured to support this work, with a new Lead Officer post within the Communities Team.

5.4   Whilst the specific project plan is to be developed, it will include a programme of engagement at key stages with:

5.4.1   elected members;

5.4.2   Council services;

5.4.3   equality staff networks;

5.4.4   people and groups with protected characteristics;

5.4.5   the public; and

5.4.6   other relevant partners e.g. members of the Equality Partnership Group, comprising equalities officers from surrounding local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

5.5   This process will aim to develop a new Framework which shifts the culture of the organisation beyond compliance to better embed equality as our way of working. A key issue for consideration within this will be developing a mechanism, through the use of metrics and milestones, to evaluate our success more effectively.

5.6   The new Equality and Diversity Framework will be presented to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in Spring 2025.

6.   Financial impact

6.1   Implementation of the Equality and Diversity Framework, including all Equality Outcomes, is resourced from existing budgets.

7.   Equality and Poverty Impact

7.1   The current Framework is designed to show how we meet our specific equality duties under The Equality Act 2010 and the specific equality duties have been created to support implementation of our Public Sector Equality Duties. The current Framework 2021-2025 also supports the End Poverty Edinburgh Plan and human rights.

7.2   An Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken when the Framework was developed. It was then reviewed when the 2 year Interim Progress report was produced in 2023.

7.3   A new Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken and shared alongside the Equality and Diversity Framework 2025/2029.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

8.1 The City of Edinburgh Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

8.2 Advancing equality and improving sustainability are intertwined and work described in this report progresses both. For example, the 20 minute neighbourhood should improve climate emissions, the environment and accessibility for disabled and older people.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance, and community impact

9.1 Engagement and consultation took place when the Framework was developed. On-going engagement with stakeholders has continued throughout the Framework's implementation, some of which is described in the report. Latterly, we have also worked closely with our recently established Officers Equality Working Group and Elected Members Equality Working Group.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 In relation to Equality Outcomes:

10.2 End Poverty in Edinburgh Annual Progress Report, 2022-23

10.3 an update on work of the Museums Decolonisation Working Group, Culture and Communities Committee Report, 7 December 2023

10.4 Delivering the 20 minute Neighbourhood Strategy Update report, to Culture and Communities Committee, 10 August 2023

10.5 We provide a "Quarterly Status Update – Digital Services" report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee every three months.

10.6 Promoting Equality report to Education, Children and Families Committee, 23 January 2024

10.7 Pay Gap report to Policy and Sustainability Committee 24 October 2023

10.8 Policy Statement on Equal pay to Policy and Sustainability Committee 24 October 2023

10.9 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update report to Policy and Sustainability Committee 24 October 2023

10.10 Previous reports on the Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25:

10.11 'Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25' and report to Policy and Sustainability Committee 20 April 21

10.12 'Equality and Diversity Framework 12-month update' report to Policy and Sustainability Committee 29 March 22

10.13 'Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025: Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Interim Progress Report' statutory report to Policy and Sustainability Committee 21 March 23

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress report on implementation of equality outcomes

March 2024: Progress Report on Activities to Deliver the Equality Outcomes in The Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025

1.1 This report provides an update on the implementation of the Equality Outcomes set out in the City of Edinburgh Council's Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025 and its subsequent revision in 2023. It describes key activities delivered and details of the on-going engagement of services with stakeholders. It also summarises year four priorities, together with the next steps for developing a new approach in the coming year.
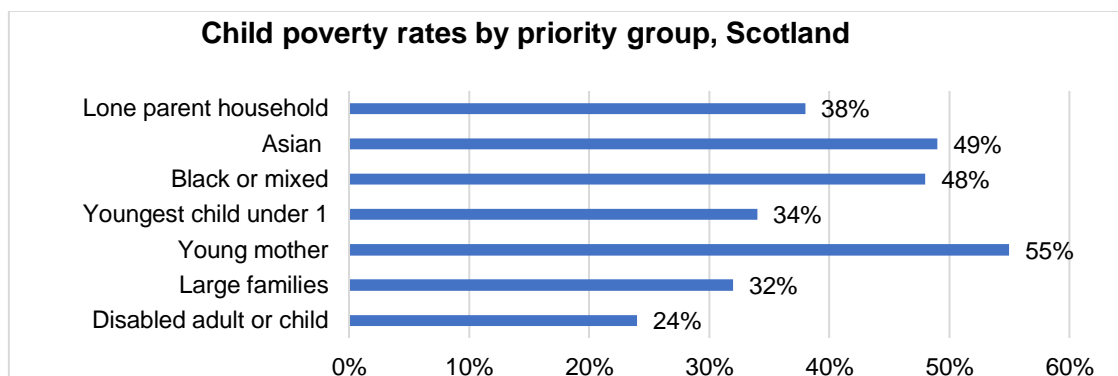
Section 1: Implementation Activity and Stakeholder Engagement

Equality outcome: People at risk from harm through poverty and deprivation, hate crime or discrimination, violence against women, children and young people, or of becoming involved in crime, are protected and supported.

End Poverty in Edinburgh

1.2 This Equality outcome impacts all protected characteristics but particularly sex, race, disability and age. The End Poverty In Edinburgh Annual Progress Report (pages 11 and 12) gives an overview of poverty rates among these groups and some of the reasons for the increased risk of poverty that they face. For example:

1.2.1 Disabled people experience additional barriers to employment and fair work, as well as a pay gap, challenges in education that make it harder to gain the same skills and qualifications as nondisabled people, as well as higher living costs, arising from specialist equipment, transport costs, and energy costs. On average families with a disabled adult or child need an additional £1,100 per month to have the same standard of living as a non-disabled household.

1.2.2 Black and minority ethnic people in Scotland fare worse in the labour market than white counterparts in terms of pay, employment, in-work poverty, and income security. Minority ethnic households also have higher housing costs due to being disproportionately represented in the private rented sector. More than 25% of Black and Minority Ethnic working adults spend over a third of their income on housing compared to just over 10% of white workers.

1.2.3 There are higher risks of poverty among women, families with children, minority ethnic groups, and disabled families. Poverty rates for some of these groups were more than double the average for citizens as a whole during 2022. This is illustrated below for child poverty.

Child poverty rates by priority group, Scotland

Priority group	Rate
Lone parent household	38%
Asian	49%
Black or mixed	48%
Youngest child under 1	34%
Young mother	55%
Large families	32%
Disabled adult or child	24%

Activity

1.3 The actions taken to address poverty are detailed in the End Poverty in Edinburgh Annual Progress report. Examples of those specific to protected characteristic groups include:

Increase income from work and opportunity to progress:

1.3.1 Employability programmes delivered a clear focus on support for parents and families from priority groups. During 2022/23 Council funded employability programmes supported 696 lone parents, 87 families with a mother under 25; 46 families with a child aged under one year; 157 large families; 1,085 families with a disabled parent; and 1,206 minority ethnic families into work or learning.

1.3.2 Within this programme, 2 projects supported through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund provided targeted support to women in Eidnburgh. 'Making Work Work' supports women returning to the labour market, while 'Works4Women' supports women who have experienced domestic abuse.

1.3.3 Through other projects, partners in the city invested £280,350 on additional employability support for people from Ethnic Minority backgrounds or New Scots (more than four times the level of investment recorded in 2017/18).

1.3.4 Alongside these, the Whole Family Equality Project recognises that ethnically-diverse families may be disadvantaged in the labour market and less likely to be in higher paid employment. The project takes a holistic, person-centred approach, blending income maximization, family support and employability support informed by and designed with people with lived experience in the target communities.

Maximise support from social safety nets:

1.3.5 Specialist support programmes were targeted at priority family types, with money advice support embedded and referred through early years' centres, schools, midwives, health visitors, hospitals, and GP practices across the city.

1.3.6 Within this support, the FAIR, The Action Group, LCiL Grapevine Service and VOCAL combine expertise on informal carer and welfare benefits and connect people a range of support and resources for disabilities. The Action Group's Black and Ethnic Minority Advice Service (BEMAS) is dedicated to BAME carers with disabled children. Together, these services generated £2.9m of additional income for 2,003 households during 2022/23.

1.3.7 The number of people supported through Free School Meal and Uniform Grant programmes increased by 61% over the past three years through automation of application processes.

Reduce the cost of living:

1.3.8 Subsidised childcare places were provided for working families in four areas of the city through Edinburgh's Affordable Childcare for Working Parents service.

Engagement with stakeholders

1.4 Over the last year, End Poverty Edinburgh citizens group have contributed to over 40 meetings, including regular meetings with elected officials at local and national levels, together with participating in workshop sessions with the Edinburgh Partnership on key topics such as housing.

1.5 The Citizens' Panel associated with the Whole Family Equality Project has influenced Council spend, commented on the Council's Equality and Diversity policy and will this year be part of the Scottish Government's budget scrutiny panel.

Community Justice

1.6 Our Community Justice Outcomes and Improvement Plan 2023-28 makes reducing reoffending and supporting those who have been convicted of an offence to successful rehabilitation into their communities a priority. It is therefore also very relevant to the above equality outcome, to those in the justice system with a range of protected characteristics and those impacted by antisocial behaviour. Many people in the justice system come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have experienced financial hardship.

Activity

1.7 A range of activity has been carried out including:

1.7.1 Women's Aid, the Council's Justice Services and Domestic Abuse Services (DAS) together developed and launched a Peer Support Service in March 2023 for women in the justice system who are/have been victims of domestic

abuse. Group sessions cover topics such as identifying needs, understanding boundaries, conversations about self-esteem, and sharing coping mechanisms. This service will begin training and mentoring a network of peer facilitators who through training will graduate to leading groups, embedding co-production and lived experience within DAS.

1.7.2 CPO Connect, a bespoke programme of life skills improvement and personal development to those subject to a Community Payback Order (CPO) was commissioned and delivered. The online interactive support is facilitated by trained counsellors and delivers flexible online group and 1:1 sessions to assist vulnerable individuals to complete their Orders and support their desistance through addressing a range of topics relevant to the client group. For example, mental health concerns, financial difficulties, improved health and wellbeing, improved self-esteem and confidence and building positive relationships and social networks.

1.7.3 Partnering with the Cyrenians 2 membership-based community pantries were funded which provide a variety of affordable chilled and fresh foods food to those experiencing poverty. Numbers accessing the service are set out below.

Month 2023	Member numbers across both pantry sites receiving food/ accessing supports
April	58
May	76
June	65
July	169
August	211
Sept	168
Total	747

1.7.4 The Travel Service continues to be funded. This brings transport eligible Edinburgh based passengers to Scottish prisons to visit their loved ones, overcoming the barriers experienced due to cost, age and/or disability, infirmity, and the challenge of transporting children on multi-stage journeys. Providing this free personalised service encourages relatives to maintain contact and relationships with family and friends, supporting good mental

health and wellbeing as well as being a motivator to desistance.   Numbers supported over recent months are shown below.

Month 2023	Number of trips	Number of people using transport
April – June	33	47
July – Sept	36	61
Total	69	108

Engagement with stakeholders

1.8   Positive feedback from service users includes:

1.8.1   "Driver T was absolutely excellent. I didn't ever feel that I had to speak. With my anxiety it is unusual for me to feel so safe with someone. I don't think you guys know what it is that you actually do for folk. You don't get enough credit. Your support means the absolute world to us and it made all the difference." (user of the Travel Service)

1.8.2   "My abilities were taken into account when carrying out the unpaid work" (individual completing unpaid work)

1.8.3   "I believe people may become more aware of the needs of the community and therefore reflect; they may also gain some hands-on experience that may be beneficial in the future. It is as well much better for their mental health and physical health than being imprisoned and it is more beneficial for everyone".

Equality Outcome: Museum stakeholders, visitors and staff perceive greater fairness, representation and justice in their communities and local authority area (via proactive celebration of the creative contribution BAME and people with protected characteristics make, and review of features in the public realm commemorating links with historic slavery and colonialism).

Activity

1.9   The protected characteristics of race and sexual orientation have been the main focus of this work. Delivery by Museums and Galleries Edinburgh has featured:

1.9.1 The revision of the Temporary Exhibitions Policy and Collections Development Policy to reference Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives with these approved by Committee in May.

1.9.2   The exhibitions programme and public programme actively feature artists, contributors or themes celebrating the creative contributions of BAME people. For example, the 2023 Windrush commemorations built on the collaboration with Edinburgh Caribbean Association on the co-produced 'Respect' exhibition to create new, original creative works and a dedicated display at Museum of Edinburgh, 'Windrush Creative Legacies'. A booklet featuring the new artworks was also produced and in November 2023 a copy was sent to every school in Edinburgh.

1.9.3   Establishment of a Decolonising Working Group which met for the first time in November 2023.

1.9.4   Partnering with Edinburgh University, a project to make our LGBTQ+ collection records more accessible and to raise awareness of the groundbreaking Remember When? project archive was delivered. The Our Rainbow Past: LGBTQ+ objects had two key aims. The first was to improve collections access for the public by revisiting the digital records for all objects in the LGBTQ+ collection, ensuring they were as comprehensive and searchable as possible. The second aim was to highlight the collection via a digital exhibition on the Our Town Stories platform.

Equality outcome: People can access the facilities and support they need within their communities.

1.10   The Council's 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy was approved in June 2021. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is about supporting people to live well locally. It aims to provide people with access to services and facilities to meet most daily needs within a 20-minute round trip by walking or wheeling. In August 2023 the Strategy was reviewed and an update provided on key projects. The work aims to reduce barriers and help to advance equality for those more vulnerable in our communities.

1.11   The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has been integrated into the new Corporate Property Strategy with 'live well locally' a key theme. This means that where learning estate projects are being delivered, opportunities will be considered to create a community learning campus to act as an anchor building at the heart of a community, integrating (where appropriate) community spaces, libraries, GP surgeries and Council services. Key property projects under construction include the MacMillan Hub, the new Currie High School, Liberton High School, Wester Hailes High School and Maybury Primary School. Other projects in early stages of design and development include St Catherine's RC Primary School and Queensferry Primary School.

Case Study – 20 minute neighbourhoods – dual level sinks installed at Royal High School.

At the Royal High School, the head teacher requested that, for the new building, we looked into options for responding to the needs of Muslim pupils when performing Wudu, particularly in what concerns the washing of their feet. After several discussions with the Architect, and the HT who engaged with the pupils, we managed to agree a solution of installing two dual level sinks within two cubicles near the toilets area. This caters for the needs of all pupils not only in terms of Muslim pupils needing to perform Wudu but also for any other pupil wanting to wash their hands or their feet.

This is currently on site near completion, and we are hoping it will inform replication in other buildings and potentially similar options for public conveniences.

1.12   The Corporate Property Strategy approved by Policy and Sustainability Committee, 22 August 2023 is aligned to the 20 minute strategy. Spatial design and accessibility are key features. An Accessibility budget of £400k per year now funds 2 x new space planning and implementation coordination posts. Remits are to explore strategy and opportunities for future development that consider accessibility, equality and inclusion within our estate.

Activity

1.13   A range of work has been undertaken including:

1.13.1 Collation of existing accessibility audits, with future audits evaluating the scale of considerations. Inclusion will be embedded where practicable recognising the age of buildings over the estate.

1.13.2 A recent accessibility audit of Waverley Court was commissioned. The SPARC network was engaged in the process and accessibility audits are planned for various other building uses and architectural types across the estate. The audits will benchmark strategic considerations in the development work. In addition, A wing of Waverley Court, 'G.6 Pilot Space', is currently under refurbishment considering workplace accessibility, equality, and inclusion considerations.

1.13.3 A matrix is being developed to measure consistently the suitability assessment of buildings across the estate and evaluate this alongside condition and net zero considerations.

1.13.4 A live suitability spreadsheet has been set up to collate feedback of physical and operational factors. General feedback is gathered from building users and from attendance by Building User Groups.

1.13.5 Feedback from the 'Our Future Work' survey will be collated using the matrix to break down common factors and themes including accessibility, equality

and inclusion. Successes and challenges will be considered in the development of the space workstream.

1.13.6 The Spatial Design Team are working with HR to develop a 'reasonable adjustments requests' process to assist with furniture and adaptations of space. Collaboration is proposed to ensure alignment with possible improvements when carrying out essential repairs and maintenance and with other funding opportunities from services.

1.13.7 Lessons learned will help to inform future 'Authority Condition Requirements' for design specification for Capital and Revenue projects.

1.13.8 The team are developing a 'Kind Spatial Design Aid' to consider GIRFEC and GIRFE 'needs' of space (Getting it right for every child and everyone) and how this can be achieved in colleague and community spaces. Consideration will be given to additional support for Learning and Trauma Informed environments. Window of tolerance considerations, security requirements of spaces and the Integrated front Door Approach initiative will all be aligned.

1.14 Where opportunities arise, design considerations will be given to non-gender specific spaces and signage e.g. WC's. However, where extensive resource is required to modify the existing estate, this and policy development needs to be considered.

1.15 Success will begin to be measured through participatory suitability assessments, lessons learned from projects and general feedback from building users.

Engagement with stakeholders

1.16 For spatial design in the workplace, we continue engagement with the disability staff network, SPARC, to assess the completed space and explore opportunities for improvement.

1.17 For our community spaces, the participatory suitability assessment is in planning to ensure full representation of building users. Development of new community space will be co-designed with building user representation.

Equality outcome: Stakeholders experience easier access to services through increased digital inclusion and alternative access to services.

1.18 In recent years, the use of digital technologies in our day-to-day life has grown exponentially. As a Council we are committed to inclusive digital systems, enabling improved, equal access and easier to access services through digital technology. This outcome underpins the drive to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities to fully participate in a digital society and take advantage of its many benefits, discoveries, and opportunities. The digital programme does this through improved services and online channels, assisting individuals across a range of protected characteristics.

Activity

1.19   Activity has included:

1.19.1 All learners in P6 to S6 have individual iPads which they can take home at the end of each day, providing equality of IT provision to learners across the spectrum of socio demographics.

1.19.2 Over Q1 of 2023/24, the device issue of our Empowered Learning programme was delivered, ensuring that all learners in early years and between P1 to P5 have access to a shared iPad. In total the project delivered 44,736 iPads and was supported by a multi-disciplinary project team including Education colleagues such as Learning Coordinators, Digital Services, and CGI.

1.19.3 The External Intranet Gateway, which was launched in June, has delivered significant benefits by enabling access to the Intranet (the Orb) for colleagues who don't have a Council email account, ensuring fairness and equality. The solution enables this staff group to connect to the ORB via their personal email accounts, providing them secure access to vital HR information such as internal staff communications, wellbeing guidance and initiatives, and general updates relating to pay and benefits. This addresses one of the actions in the Tanner Report. Of the 3,857 in scope workers, 1,400 signups to the system were made in the first three months.

1.19.4 There was continued investment and development of the Peoples Network within libraries. This provides members of the public with free and secure access to computers, the internet and Wi-Fi connectivity for customers who wish to use their own devices. It helps to ensure the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are available to all citizens including people who lack digital skills and confidence or may have limited or no access to IT equipment and connectivity. The scope of the Peoples Network includes 184 desktops across 33 libraries, consisting of 154 general devices and 30 devices locked down for catalogue searches.

1.19.5 Expansion continues of the range of online services and improvements offered to citizens through the Council CRM system. Key highlights over last year include:

1.19.5.1   Request/report disabled parking bay form.

1.19.5.2   Upgrade of Verint CRM

1.19.5.3   Tables and Chairs permit payment form

1.19.5.4   Housing benefit short stay form

1.19.5.5   Holiday hub payment form

1.19.5.6   Repairs general enquiry form

1.19.6 Work has been carried out with 3rd party web accessibility specialists to ensure annual accessibility compliance audits have been taken for the Council's core web site and intranet, and accessibility statements published on the home pages. The audits were conducted against the "AA" standard of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) which is designed to ensure websites are accessible to service users with impairments to their vision, hearing, mobility, thinking and understanding.

1.19.7 The "Reciteme" toolbar has been added to our website which allows those with sight or reading needs, for whom English is not their first language, or with dyslexia to be able to access our website information. The toolbar allows website text to be changed into easy-to-read formats or translated into a variety of languages, which can be read aloud too.

1.19.8 The Smart Waste and Smart Housing aspects of the Smart Cities programme has seen the installation of 11,000 bin sensors and 1500 humidity / temperature sensors in 500 homes. Information from the humidity / temperature sensors is fed in real time to the housing team, enabling damp issues to be quickly identified and repaired. This is of particular benefit to vulnerable households.

1.19.9 Work is underway within the Housing Service to rollout an integrated and automated Tenant Engagement Platform for online engagement with social housing tenants in areas such as Automated Transactional Polls, Community Consultations and Annual Surveys. At present, individual consultation exercises are carried out in ways which are typically manual, time consuming and inefficient and generate a relatively low return. The new system will help drive equality outcomes and assist the Housing service in better understanding social housing customer's experiences and the challenges faced.

Engagement with stakeholders

1.20 We continue to provide and sign-post a wide range of digital support tools within libraries including providing access to computers, the Internet, digital content, and digital literacy programs.

Equality outcome: Ensuring all applicants (for social housing) including those with specific needs or who are vulnerable can use and access the application and choice based letting process as required as we move to having more services online.

1.21 Digital improvements are part of the wider Housing Service Improvement Plan. Following completion of an Accessible Housing Study, an Accessible Housing Sounding Board was set up to identify areas of work to take forward. One of the areas identified is around access to housing, which considers information and support for tenants seeking affordable accessible housing. The work aims to reduce

barriers primarily for, but not limited to, older people, disabled people and people who first language is not English.

Activity

1.22 Work has included:

    1.22.1 Housing Online was introduced in April 2021. A project group has been developing additional Housing Online modules, namely a Housing Options Checker and Online Application Form which should be introduced in Spring 2024.

    1.22.2 The Texthelp's plugin ReachDeck (formerly BrowseAloud), is a text-to-speak functionality currently installed on the EdIndex web page. This ensures online content is as accessible and usable by as many applicants as possible. It facilitates translation from English into many languages and allows the website to be more accessible to people with a visual impairment or additional needs, such as dyslexia. It has also been added to the actual bidding site, meaning applicants can read adverts etc. in different languages/formats. ReachDeck will also feature on the Housing Options Checker and Online Application Form when they go live.

    1.22.3 As applicants using Housing Online need internet access and an email address to register, housing staff can create logins for applicants without an email address to allow support workers, family or friends to assist the applicant/bid on their behalf. Housing staff can also bid on behalf of applicants requiring assistance, without the need for a login. Work is also underway to introduce automated bidding to applicants who are unable to bid online and have no-one to help. For eligible applicants, the system will place bids automatically on up to three properties weekly according to the applicant's preferred area of the city and number of rooms they are eligible for.

    1.22.4 The option of paper application forms will still be available. Libraries and Locality Offices already offer help with bidding and applicants will be able to access similar assistance in completing the online application when it is live. Library staff will be given training on completing the Housing Options Checker and Online Application Form before it goes live. The Housing Service also received funding for 16 tablets, with data, that applicants who have no access to the internet will be able to borrow.

1.23 A recent addendum to a motion on EdIndex considered at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 5 December 2023 links to this equality outcome. A report in August/September 2024 will provide a further update.

Engagement with Stakeholders

1.24 As the Housing Online project extends beyond the City of Edinburgh Council, we will engage with partner Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). A core group of

partner RSLs will be invited to both review the Application and Checker and take part in the necessary testing. It is expected that user group and accessibility issues will form part of the testing phase with input from Council and RSL testers informing any changes or improvements to the final question and design format. We will also carry out testing with members of the public who have additional needs, younger and older applicants and applicants whose first language is not English. Once completed, feedback and contact information can be included on the sites to ensure continued improvement and applicants' opinion is taken into account.

1.25   Elected members on Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee have requested additional information and activity around supporting people who do not have online access or have additional support needs to apply for affordable housing.

Equality outcome: Children and young people have improved health and wellbeing because there is a reduction in bullying and prejudice-based incidents.

1.26   The Education, Children and Justice Services Equality, Diversity and inclusion Action Plan 2023-24 provides details of the work that the Council is undertaking across three themes: increasing diversity in the (schools) workforce; developing an inclusive, diverse and culturally inclusive curriculum; health and wellbeing – preventing and responding to bullying and prejudice. .

Activity:

1.27   The most recent report to the Education, Children and Families Committee provides more detail, including:

1.27.1 The implementation of a strengthened procedure for preventing and responding to bullying and prejudice amongst children and young people, with a focus on strengthening communication with pupils on how to report incidents and what will happen when incidents are reported and on consistency of recording.

1.27.2 Thirty seven education staff across levels and sectors have completed or are completing the national Building Racial Literacy (BRL) programme and we have established a local BRL network.

1.27.3 A parent-carer leaflet on bullying and prejudice has been created and published.

1.27.4 The work of pupil equality groups has been supported and celebrated through the annual Young People Equalities Event with speakers (including Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament), pupil presentations and stalls from a range of equalities organisations.

1.27.5 The second annual Saroj Lal Award for Edinburgh schools was delivered with entries under the categories: Proud to be me; How prejudice makes me feel; Artivism (Art-Activism).

1.27.6 The roll out the LGBT Charter in secondary schools has continued, in partnership with LGBT Youth Scotland: 9 secondary schools and one special school achieved and LGBT Charter Award, with a further 6 secondary schools expected to achieve an award by March 2024.

1.27.7 MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention) is a peer education programme providing young people with the language and framework to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence. To successfully embed MVP in our 23 secondary schools, over 90 Education staff have been trained, and 241 young people trained as mentors.

1.27.8 Schools have participated in education projects delivered by the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, including visits by inter-faith panels and activities for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Engagement with stakeholders

1.28 At school level, school Equality Co-ordinators and wider staff continue to engage with children and young people through Pupil Equality Groups in each school. Some schools also have pupil Anti-racism groups and GSAs (Genders and Sexuality Alliances).

1.29 At local authority level, this session we have engaged with children and young people through the Young People's Equalities Event and engage with parents-carers through our Equalities Parent Reference Group and a parent from this group sits on the Edinburgh Learns (Education) Equalities Board. This Board has diverse representation from the voluntary sector and other external partners.

Equality outcome: A more diverse and inclusive working environment is experienced by colleagues who share protected characteristics and colleagues are supported by an inclusive workplace culture and feel confident to challenge prejudice-based incidents.

Activity

1.30 Key areas of progress include:

1.30. Colleagues have been encouraged to supply or update their equalities data and there has been a steady increase in completion rates across all protected characteristics, achieving a 20% increase for some protected characteristics. This provides an increased understanding of our workforce equalities profile.

1.30.2 Progress has been made to enable a full view of the recruitment process from an equalities perspective, using the data to identify any trends or areas of potential bias (conscious or unconscious) to inform where resources may be most effectively targeted to increase the diversity of our workforce.

1.30.3 A detailed intersectional analysis of pay gap data has been undertaken, including data modelling projections to identify where to target resources to achieve maximum positive impact on pay gap outputs.

1.30.4 Mechanisms for improving recording and reporting incidents of unacceptable behaviour are being explored, including prejudice-based incidents, as well as a review of a wide range of related policies and procedures.

1.30.5 Procurement/development of e-learning packages on Islamophobia, Introduction to Equalities, Race Equality and Neurodiversity to raise awareness for colleagues of the issues facing colleagues who share, or are perceived to share, these protected characteristics.

1.30.6 Continuing to roll out active Bystander and Anti-Racist Practice sessions.

1.30.7 Launch and roll out of our new 'behaviours' – Respect, Integrity and Flexibility. Designing systems and processes to reflect these behaviours throughout and ongoing work to raise awareness about our expectations of colleagues and managers.

1.30.8 Joined Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Champions Programme.

1.30.9 Newly developed 'culture capture' question set will be rolled out from January 2024 to collect baseline data and track progress over time.

Equality outcome: Colleagues are supported by a holistic and preventative approach to financial, mental and physical wellbeing.

Activity

1.31   Activity included:

1.31.1 A full review of our approach to reasonable adjustments to improve and simplify our processes, information and guidance for managers and colleagues, including access to financial support and technology or assistive solutions.

1.31.2 Promotion of inclusive leadership practice by deepening senior leadership understanding of the lived experience of colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds, via the implementation of an extensive reverse mentoring scheme. Providing peer support to Mentors and reflective practice for Mentees throughout.

1.31.3 Continued support for our six colleague networks, most of which were established to raise the profile and visibility of colleagues who share a protected characteristic, providing an informal mechanism to support, engage and learn from the lived experience of colleagues:

    1.31.3.1   SPARC: long term conditions and disabilities

    1.31.3.2   NEWS: women

    1.31.3.3   PRIDE: LGBT+

    1.31.3.4   Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network

    1.31.3.5   Black and Minority Ethnic Equality Workers Forum

    1.31.3.6   Sustainability Network.

Engagement with Stakeholders

1.32   Engagement with stakeholders has continued for both of the workforce related equality outcomes including engagement with colleague networks, elected members, HR and Communications colleagues, service areas, trade unions and other partners as appropriate.

Section 2: Forward Work Programme

2.1   Work will continue during 2024/25 to implement the existing Equality and Diversity Framework. This will include a number of key priorities for the coming year and beyond under each of the outcomes as set out below.

People at risk from harm through poverty and deprivation, hate crime or discrimination, violence against women, children and young people, or of becoming involved in crime, are protected and supported.

End Poverty in Edinburgh Plan

During 2024/25 work will continue across all four priorities of the End Poverty in Edinburgh Plan, including actions to

- Increase income from employment and opportunity to progress – with specialist projects continuing to provide support to help families from protected and priority groups to access and progress in fair work in Edinburgh, and to reduce the poverty related attainment and achievement gap

- Maximise the benefits from social safety nets – with continuing programmes of work to provide targeted support to help people from priority backgrounds to access crisis support and money, debt and welfare advice needed to help prevent poverty and homelessness

- Reduce the cost of living – with projects continuing to improve access to decent affordable homes in Edinburgh, increase access to affordable childcare, improve digital inclusion and other targeted support to address the rising cost of energy and other essentials.

- Make it easier to get help – with programmes designed to increase meaningful participation of people with lived experience in service design and evaluation, and reduce the negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discrimination that people living in poverty can face when accessing employability and other services.

Community Justice Outcomes and Improvement Plan 2023-28

- Peer support work further developed and extended so that lived experience is evident within supports provided, improving motivation for those in the justice system to live crime free lives.

- Continued development of the range of interventions available for people who are diverted from prosecution to support them to address their unmet needs.

- Routine screening on mental health and trauma to be built into all justice services.

- Improving the co-ordination and joint working across different throughcare providers following the Scottish Government's national commissioning exercise to provide a core voluntary throughcare service in every local authority area.

Museum stakeholders, visitors and staff perceive greater fairness, representation and justice in their communities and local authority area.

- *'Keep the Faith'* a new, grant-funded community collecting project in partnership with Edinburgh Interfaith Association will actively seek to augment our social history collections with material from faith groups under-represented in Edinburgh currently. An exhibition featuring the new collection is also being planned.

- 'Disrupting the Narrative' project, led by Edinburgh Makar Hannah Lavery, will see a group of BAME writers create new works for display in our Royal Mile museum venues as part of the decolonising work underway within MGE.

People can access the facilities and support they need within their communities.

- Improve access to and co-location of services by embedding the 20-minute neighbourhood approach in all Council building and public realm projects including completion of the MacMillan hub and Ratho hub projects; together with the commencement of the new Liberton High School and Maybury Primary school projects.

Corporate Property Strategy:

- Collating, reviewing and carrying out further accessibility audits, to form a strategic review.
- Development and trialling of participatory suitability assessment of buildings.
- Development of accessibility, equality, and inclusion considerations of Authority Condition Requirements.
- Development and collating feedback from pilot spaces.
- Development and trial of 'Kind Spatial Design Aid'

Stakeholders experience easier access to services through increased digital inclusion and alternative access to services.

- Review Council devices ensuring accessibility needs and access to assistive software where required, is handled sensitively.

- Progress the development of a new social care IT system which improves access to customer data helping vulnerable client groups.

- Deliver *a* new HR cloud-based system providing access to colleagues without a work email address.

- Enhance our Debt Management system providing friendlier customer access and improved functionality.

- Undertake further website accessibility audits and updates to the core Council website.

- Revise the Digital and Smart City Strategy for 2024-2027 encompassing equality issues and the rolling programme of work will be articulated in the implementation plan.

Ensuring all applicants including those with specific needs or who are vulnerable can use and access the application and choice based letting process as required as we move to having more services online.

- Improve our understanding of the challenges and specific needs of people with protected characteristics when applying and bidding for housing.

- Ensure easier access to services through increased digital inclusion and alternative access.

- Consider ways to support people at application stage where they do not have online access or have additional support needs.

Children and young people have improved health and wellbeing because there is a reduction in bullying and prejudice-based incidents.

- Improving schools' access to data from the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module to facilitate closer monitoring at school level.

- Writing supplementary guidance on tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

- Implementing MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention) in secondary schools.

- Extending delivery of anti-racism training.

- Strengthening evaluation of impact.

A more diverse and inclusive working environment is experienced by colleagues who share protected characteristics and colleagues are supported by an inclusive workplace culture and feel confident to challenge prejudice-based incidents.

The full set of commitments for an inclusive workforce can be found here (Slides 22-24) broadly grouped under the following focus areas:

- Data and Measurement

- Leadership, Learning and Development

- Pay Gap Activity

- Inclusive Recruitment

- Progression, Succession and Retention

- Anti-Discriminatory Culture

- External Benchmarking

- Equally Safe at Work

Colleagues are supported by a holistic and preventative approach to financial, mental and physical wellbeing.

- Following the 'culture capture' survey in June 2022, we will continue to develop evidence about the culture of the organisation and relate this to our organisational 'behaviours'.

- We will work towards creating an inclusive workforce and tackling prejudiced incidents through ongoing development and use of evidence.

- We will continue to develop and support the colleague networks.

2.2   A final report on the current Framework will be produced and presented to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in line with statutory requirements in Spring 2025.

2.3 Concurrent to the delivery of this activity, work will be taken forward to develop the Equality and Diversity Framework 2025/2029. This work will be informed by a range of activity including:

- Implementation of current framework
- Mapping of equality, diversity and inclusion activity across the Council which will be the subject of a report to Council in Spring 2024.
- Key areas of work in progress in response to Council motions namely, gender recognition, islamophobia, and work with the LGBTIQ+ community.

2.4 The aim is to develop a new approach to equality, diversity and inclusion recognising the need to move away from compliance to culturally embed this as our way of working.

2.5 This development work will include an engagement programme involving a wide range of stakeholders including:

- elected members;

- Council services;

- equality staff networks;

- people and groups with protected characteristics;

- the public; and

- other relevant partners e.g. members of the Equality Partnership Group, comprising equalities officers from surrounding local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

2.6 A key issue for consideration within this will be developing a mechanism, through the use of metrics and milestones, to more effectively evaluate our success.

2.7 The new Equality and Diversity Framework will be presented to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in Spring 2025.

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Members Equality Working Group: Terms of Reference

| Executive/routine |
| Wards |

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:

1.1.1 Agrees the Terms of Reference and Chair for the Members Equality Working Group.

Dr. Deborah Smart

Executive Director of Corporate Services

Contact: Julia Sproul, Senior Policy and insight officer

E-mail: juliasproul@edinburgh.gov.uk

Report

Members Equality Working Group: Terms of Reference

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Members Equality Working Group has met twice since it was established. As part of these early meetings a term of reference was agreed which is now with the Policy and Sustainability Committee for consideration. The Committee is also asked to agree the appointment of Chair.

3. Background

3.1 The remit of the previous (short life) Equalities Working group set up in 2019 was:

   3.1.1 To support the inclusion and innovation aims of the Council's Economic Strategy

   3.1.2 To improve citizens' access to Council services, including services operated on the Council's behalf

   3.1.3 To improve citizens' access to events, meetings and visits to Council owned buildings, parks and land.

   3.1.4 To improve citizens' access to employment and training opportunities within the Council.

3.2 The Council approved the establishment of a Members Equality Working Group on 16 March 2023.

3.3 Since then, the group has met twice, and the terms of reference has been revised and agreed as set out in the appendix 1. In addition, Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron was nominated by the group as Chair.

4. Main report

4.1 To date, the working group have discussed a broad range of equalities topics including:

   4.1.1 the Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25 progress

   4.1.2 the workforce EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Action Plan

4.1.3 Stonewall Champions and UK workplace Equality Index

4.1.4 various motions and corresponding follow up work including that related to Pride, Gender Recognition, Islamophobia and EDI training.

4.1.5 a response to the Human Rights consultation and the BSL consultation

4.1.6 the recently established Accessibility Commission

4.2 A workshop in April/May will firm up a workplan for the group. Topics for consideration when establishing this workplan may include:

4.2.1 plans to develop a new Framework 25-28 and a refreshed EDI Strategy

4.2.2 reporting dates for equality matters, and

4.2.3 key dates in the Diversity calendar

5.   Next Steps

5.1 The Members Equality Working Group are developing their workplan which will be brought back to the Policy and Sustainability Committee for consideration. This report will include a collation of all equality led activity from across the Council.

6.   Financial impact

6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

7.   Equality and Poverty Impact

7.1 Working groups provide a key vehicle for policy development and discussion with stakeholders, informing the decision-making and governance of the Council as a whole.

7.2 The working group will share progress of the Equality and Diversity Framework, strengthen our delivery of the public sector equality duty and specific equality duties aswell as assist to shift the culture of the organisation to better embed equality.

8.   Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

8.1 No climate or environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

9.   Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

9.1 While these terms of reference vary from the original terms of reference set for the Working Groups this does not constitute a risk.

10. Background reading/external references

Review of Political Management Arrangements 2022 – Full Council – 15 December 2022

Working Groups – Policy and Sustainability Committee – 6 August 2019

Appointments to Working Group - Full Council – 16 March 2023

11. Appendices

11.1   Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Members Equalities Working Group

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Members/Officer Equalities working group

1 Purpose

- To share progress on the implementation of the current Equalities
- Framework, action plan and pay gap reporting.
- To discuss and agree our strategic direction for our future
- Equalities Framework 2025 to 2029.
- To share and agree our high-level priority actions and discuss and
- agree priorities.
- To share and discuss Officer responses to Council motions.

2 Chair

The Chair will be a member of the Administration.

3 Membership

Elected member from each political party

Chair and members of the Officer Equalities Group as nominated.

4 Support

Secretariat will be provided by Committee Services.

5 Frequency of meetings

The Group will meet quarterly and otherwise as required.

6 Ways of Working

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Our Behaviours:-

Respect - we're inclusive, we promote equality, we treat people with fairness, understanding and kindness and we consider others in our decisions and actions.

Integrity - we're open and honest, we take responsibility, we build trust and we pull together to do what's right for our residents, colleagues and city

Flexibility - we're open minded, we keep it simple, we adapt to provide great service and find better ways of doing things, and we embrace opportunities for shared working and learning