

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

Executive/routine Executive
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is recommended to note the progress being made in relation to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan since it was approved on 1 October 2019.

Stephen S. Moir

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Katy Miller, Head of Human Resources

Human Resources Division, Resources Directorate

E-mail: katy.miller@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel: 0131 469 5522

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report provides an update on the progress made with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan approved by this Committee on 1 October 2019.

2.2 Key achievements include:

- on 1 October 2019 Committee approved a new Recruitment and Selection policy which includes the explicit aim that *no person experiences discrimination as part of our recruitment process*;
- a new *unconscious bias* training session was launched in March 2020;
- a new approach to record all prejudice-based incidents was launched in August 2020;
- a campaign to increase the reporting of diversity information commenced in September 2020; and,
- five colleague networks have either started or continued meeting and the Council is proud to have colleague networks for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues, carers, colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender plus (LGBT+) colleagues and women.

3. Background

3.1 A new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan, with a progress update, was reported to Finance and Resources Committee on 23 May 2019. The Strategy, together with the Action Plan, was subsequently approved by this Committee on 1 October 2019.

3.2 The Strategy and Action Plan were developed in conjunction with a focus group which has representation from elected members, trade unions and our colleague networks, including colleagues in our BAME Network.

3.3 The Strategy and accompanying Action Plan was also reviewed by the Employers Network for Equalities and Inclusion (ENEI) and incorporated best practice advice and ideas from other external organisations such as Close the Gap, CoSLA and other local authorities.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Aligned to our three strategic pillars of Wellbeing, Poverty and Sustainability, our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our commitment as an organisation to develop a truly inclusive culture and workplace; one which values and recognises the contribution that a diverse workforce makes.
- 4.2 In addition to our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the opportunity has been taken to benchmark our current organisational status in relation to Diversity and Inclusion by the ENEI (Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion) against eight areas: *your workforce; strategy and plan; leadership and accountability; attraction and recruitment; training and development; other employment practices; communications and engagement; and procurement.*
- 4.3 The outputs from the benchmarking exercise will result in further actions being agreed with the focus group and implemented over the next year.
- 4.4 The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will also be a key theme in the 2020-2023 People Strategy (our next people chapter following on from our 2017-2020 People Strategy).
- 4.5 It was recognised by the Diversity & Inclusion focus group that the Council is on a journey to realise the commitments made in full and agreed that three building blocks will underpin our Strategy and Action Plan:

Strategic Themes	Developing our understanding	Building an inclusive culture	Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce
Building Blocks	Undertake external D&I benchmarking exercise	Use annual planner to increase visibility and highlight key dates	Review our policies and guidance to ensure best practice
	Campaign to raise awareness and increase rates of equalities data collection	Support and promote new and existing colleague networks	Consider ways to advertise and recruit that will increase workforce diversity
Ensure we meet our Equal Pay commitments			

4.6 Developing our understanding

- 4.6.1 One of the key building blocks to achieving our ambitions of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the city is to develop a greater understanding of colleagues currently employed in the Council. A campaign to raise the importance of colleagues disclosing their diversity information commenced in September 2020.
- 4.6.2 The information requested will mirror the 2021 Census data definitions approved by the Scottish Government in May 2020, and it is expected that all local authorities will use this data set moving forward.

- 4.6.3 The decision to wait until the 2021 Census data set was finalised means the Council will be able to benchmark locally and nationally against other local authorities in the future.
- 4.6.4 To build a truly inclusive culture, the Council must be willing to face into and address unacceptable behaviour between colleagues. However, we have previously had no mechanism for colleagues to report, or for the Council to record, prejudice-based incidents (outwith our current policies) within our organisation.
- 4.6.5 In August 2020 the Council introduced a way for colleagues to report all prejudice-based incidents and these are now being centrally recorded.
- 4.6.6 A Council wide campaign proactively supported by the trade unions will continue to market this initiative over the coming year and will adopt a thematic approach to campaigning focused on each protected characteristic.

4.7 Building an inclusive culture

- 4.7.1 Since the introduction of the annual D&I calendar events such as Ramadan, Eid, Carers Week and LGBT History and Pride months have been highlighted to colleagues across the Council. This is a key step in building an inclusive culture and has only been possible because of the incredible support of colleague networks, our collaborative work with trades union colleagues and the willingness of colleagues to write personal stories which increase awareness of their lived experiences.
- 4.7.2 Personal storytelling/lived experiences has generated a lot of positive feedback and discussion and is something we will continue to promote.
- 4.7.3 In the last year, five colleague networks have either started or continued meeting and the Council is proud to have colleague networks for BAME colleagues, carers, colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition, LGBT+ colleagues and women.
- 4.7.4 The Council will continue to embed current colleague networks across the organisation whilst, at the same time, encouraging the development of other networks such as an armed forces family network and an interfaith network.
- 4.7.5 To support colleagues to gain a better understanding of equality issues, and to challenge unconscious bias, we are committed to providing appropriate learning opportunities for all colleagues.
- 4.7.6 A new e-learning module was launched at the end of March 2020 and was accessed over 500 times by colleagues in the first three months.
- 4.7.8 This new module complements a suite of other learning currently available including modules on: *equality and diversity; what is equality and diversity; equality law basics; direct and indirect discrimination; bullying and harassment; and achieving equality and diversity.*
- 4.7.9 As a learning organisation, the Council has for the past year been part of a 'shadow group' observing and learning from local authorities participating in the Equally Safe

At Work employer accreditation pilot programme run by Close the Gap. This work will further inform our thinking in relation to gender equality.

4.8 Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce

- 4.8.1 On 1 October 2019 Committee approved a new Recruitment and Selection policy which includes the explicit aim that *no person experiences discrimination as part of our recruitment process*.
- 4.8.2 To support the embedding of the Recruitment and Selection policy, new guidance and e-learning offerings for recruiting managers were created. In line with the previous policy it is mandatory for all recruiting managers to 'pass' the e-learning module before they undertake any element of the recruitment process.
- 4.8.3 A review of the content on MyJobScotland has been undertaken resulting in a more inclusive approach to the language used, aimed at encouraging a more diverse range of applicants.
- 4.8.4 We are continually reviewing our job profiles to ensure inclusive language and are looking at ways of attracting more diverse applicants to posts which are traditionally 'segregated occupations' including Twitter, LinkedIn and targeted campaigns on social media.
- 4.8.5 In addition to one off recruitment activities, the Council is looking at developing a longer-term pipeline of talent in critical roles. This includes working in partnership with Education Scotland, Moray House, Skills Development Scotland and Police Scotland to look at how it increases diversity in the education and youthwork workforce. The work is in its early stages but will involve, for example, collaboration with higher education providers to promote education and youthwork as career options for undecided students, awareness raising campaigns and active targeted recruitment strategies.
- 4.8.6 We have worked in partnership with the Council for Ethnic Minority and Voluntary Organisations (CEVCO) to run a virtual recruitment / awareness raising event to promote 60 early years posts which we recruited to in August / September 2020.
- 4.8.7 In collaboration with Trade Union Equality Representatives, guidance was launched for managers in March 2020 to help them provide better support to colleagues who are experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause.
- 4.8.8 Draft guidance for supporting colleagues who are transitioning has also been produced and will be issued later this year.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The focus group comprising elected members, trade unions, network colleagues and officers will continue to meet to support the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

- 5.2 In August and September 2020 two significant campaigns commenced. The first of which encouraged colleagues to report and record prejudice-based incidents through their line manager; the second encouraged all colleagues to update their diversity information. These campaigns will initially run for 12 months.
- 5.3 Further work will continue to embed the good work achieved over the previous 12 months and also to develop stronger relationships both internally and externally to assist us in achieving our aspirations of building a truly inclusive culture.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Any associated costs will be contained within current budgets.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan was developed in collaboration with elected members, trade unions, colleague networks and other council officers.
- 7.2 The Council also seeks input from external partners such as the ENEI, Close the Gap and CoSLA as appropriate.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan – 1 October 2019](#)
- 8.2 [Recruitment and Selection Policy – 1 October 2019](#).

9. Appendices

N/A