

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10am, Tuesday, 29 March 2022

Equality and Diversity Framework 12-month update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To agree, due to the continuing impact of the pandemic over the first year of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025,
 - 1.1.1 to continue to progress with all equality outcomes including the five established priority outcomes as set out in the framework, and
 - 1.1.2 to receive a report on progress with implementation of the outcomes in April 2023 as per statutory requirements.
- 1.2 To note the commitment to on-going engagement with stakeholders throughout the implementation of the Framework with the intention that this engagement informs the progress report in April 2023.

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Equality and Diversity Framework 12-month Review

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council's Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25 was developed during 2020, a time filled with pressure on services and barriers to engagement as a result of Covid-19. It was also a time in which inequalities widened and barriers or disadvantage for particular groups were exacerbated. Notwithstanding these challenges, through substantial evidence gathering and partnership work, the Council identified five specific priority equality outcomes and five further broader equality outcomes for inclusion in the Framework. These outcomes, approved by the Policy and Sustainability Committee in April 2021, contribute to the Council's compliance with The Equality Act 2010 and associated Scottish regulations.
- 2.2 Whilst an online consultation was undertaken despite the pandemic's impact, work to target key groups was restrictive at that time. As a result, at the time of reporting, a commitment was made to review the outcomes after twelve months reflecting the assumptions around an imminent end to lockdown. This was in addition to the Council's statutory requirement to provide a progress report with opportunity to review framework outcomes in April 2023.
- 2.3 The pandemic has continued to affect the lives of staff and residents throughout 2021 and into 2022. While the pandemic has had an ongoing impact on our ability to engage effectively across all groups with protected characteristics, officers have had ongoing deliberations and where possible ongoing engagement with key equalities groups including EARN. Reflecting these discussions and the current context we remain in as a city, this report proposes extending the agreed framework outcomes and priorities for a further year meaning that progress on implementation of the outcomes would be reported to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in April 2023 as per statutory requirements.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to publish Equality Outcomes and report on progress under The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025, and its subsequent progress reports due in 2023 and 2025, aim to demonstrate how these and other equality duties are met.

- 3.2 In preparing a set of equality outcomes the Council must:
- 3.2.1 take reasonable steps to involve persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and any person who appears to the Council to represent the interests of those people.
 - 3.2.2 consider relevant evidence relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic.
 - 3.2.3 publish a report on progress to achieve those outcomes every 2 years.
- 3.3 At the time of reporting in 2021, the Council committed to a twelve month review reflecting the expectation that the restrictions in place would ease imminently making deeper engagement with priority groups possible. This also reflected a belief that the ending of lockdown would potentially expose a change in need or priority within the city. The prolonged nature of the pandemic has limited the opportunity for a meaningful revision of the priorities. However, following ongoing engagement with EARN, key officer groups who continue to collaborate on implementation of the Equality Framework recommend that the outcomes and priorities remain appropriate and should be extended for a further year. This would mean applying the statutory reporting framework timeline with a report to Policy and Sustainability Committee expected in April 2023.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The themes and equality outcomes are:
- 4.2 Inclusive Communities: 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
- 4.2.1 Museum stakeholders, visitors and staff perceive greater fairness, representation and justice in their communities and local authority area
- 4.3 Accessing facilities and support: People can access the facilities and support they need within their communities
- 4.3.1 Stakeholders experience easier access to services through increased digital inclusion and alternative access to services
- 4.4 Having a warm and affordable home: Increasing the availability of affordable homes, making sure that they meet people's needs, making heating more affordable and making the process of applying for a home easier
- 4.4.1 Stakeholders at risk of homelessness are enabled to access suitable accommodation on leaving hospitals or prisons
- 4.5 Improved health, wellbeing and attainment for young people: Increasing the life chances of all young people by increasing attainment at school
- 4.5.1 Children and young people have improved health and wellbeing because there is a reduction in bullying and prejudice-based incidents

- 4.6 Diverse and inclusive workplace: 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 behaviours
- 4.6.1 Colleagues are supported by a holistic and preventative approach to financial, mental and physical wellbeing.
- 4.7 Since approval of the Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25 in April 2021, outcome leads have been brought together to collaboratively share progress and to be provided with strategic support, information and guidance where required.
- 4.8 As delivery of the outcomes progress, performance data and an evaluation of the impact for people with protected characteristics will be able to be collated in April 23. However, some actions and outputs have already been delivered and, as an example, include the following:
- 4.8.1 As part of our [Community Safety Strategy](#), priority workstreams are now in place to both reduce the likelihood of children and young people engaging in harmful or offending behaviour, and to improve digital safety.
- 4.8.2 The first [Annual Progress Report](#) against the Council's End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan was approved by Policy and Sustainability at its meeting on 5 October 2021. The report provides a summary of actions taken by the Council and partners in response to the calls to action made by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission during the period October 2020 to the end of September 2021. These actions were designed to:
- 4.8.2.1 Build a strong foundation for the long-term actions needed to change ways of working and prevent poverty in Edinburgh, and
- 4.8.2.2 Provide immediate improvements and upscaling of support for people experiencing poverty in the city.
- 4.8.3 Museums & Galleries are currently working with colleagues in Culture and Wellbeing and Human Resources, to progress awareness and understanding of a range of equality, diversity and inclusion issues. This includes initiation of a wide-ranging training programme which includes a course on inclusive recruitment and aims to increase black and minority ethnic workforce representation.
- 4.8.4 Museums & Galleries are also continuing to support the work of the independent Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review. An [interim progress report](#) was presented to Full Council in June 2021 and a public consultation over Winter 2021-22 attracted over 4,000 responses. These will inform the Review Group's recommendations on actions to address modern day discrimination through consideration of the legacy in the public realm. The final report will be published in 2022.
- 4.8.5 The Accessible Housing Study 2021/22 research to improve understanding of accessible housing requirements in the city is nearing completion. Findings from

the study will be used to inform wheelchair housing targets. ([Strategic Housing Investment Plan report, November 2021](#))

- 4.8.6 Pathways are now in place to support transition at point of leaving prisons and hospitals into accommodation including [housing options](#) for young people who offend.
- 4.8.7 In schools, a robust procedure for Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice is in place, with specific guidance on Tackling Racist Incidents and Creating an Anti-racist Culture. Training for Senior Leaders and work with children and young people has resulted in increased awareness, reporting and recording of bullying and prejudice-based incidents. Over the same period, the bi-annual pupil wellbeing survey indicates mainly positive trends for questions related to bullying. ([Promoting Equality, March 2022](#))
- 4.9 The reporting schedule recognises the significant challenge of obtaining adequate equality data to evidence progress. Scottish Government recognises this as a national issue and in April 2021 launched the first phase of the Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP). The Council recognises that in many cases a mix of providing context, utilising national and local data and illustrating progress with case-studies will be required.
- 4.10 Partnership meetings with NHS Lothian, Midlothian Council, West Lothian Council, City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Education Authorities, and Midlothian and East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnerships also continues with the aim of identifying and acting on opportunities to work together on similar outcomes. Additionally, Council Officers continue to liaise with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and the Edinburgh Licensing Board on equality work.
- 4.11 The Equality and Rights Network (EaRN), funded by The City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian, played a significant part in developing the outcomes. EaRN utilised their network (of over 190 members) to get feedback from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, adapting its methods during government restrictions, to ensure that hard to reach groups had as much opportunity as possible to contribute to the consultation. The Council continues to work with EaRN as a partner in this workstream and to use feedback from the engagement activities of service areas, to inform equalities work and the recommendations in this report.
- 4.12 With the easing of restrictions, work is underway to build on this engagement through the implementation of an engagement plan. Analysis of the responses of the initial equality framework consultation informs this plan. For example, people with learning difficulties and gypsy/traveller communities will be targeted. An intersectional approach will also be undertaken both in targeting groups and analysing responses.
- 4.13 As an on-going process, the engagement aims to develop relationships with residents in Edinburgh and the Lothians, as well as organisations that have links to protected groups. Initially, the engagement is focused on increasing knowledge of the framework with priority groups through the provision of updates and improved feedback channels.

- 4.14 By April 2023 a more consistent process for informing and gathering feedback with those people most impacted will result in improved awareness of the equalities work and additional evidence to support the development and statutory reporting of progress on the delivery of the framework. The progress report in April 2023 will utilise this information to also inform a review of the equality outcomes within the statutory timescales.
- 4.15 It should be noted that the Scottish Government is currently reviewing the Scottish Specific Duties (SSDs) that support the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland. There is no change envisaged as to how the Council will undertake its current duties until any new requirements come into force (anticipated in 2025). A response to the consultation on this was submitted to the Policy and Sustainability Committee on 22 February 2022.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following this Committee report and in accordance with easing of restrictions the on-going engagement plan will be progressed in conjunction with EaRN.
- 5.2 Equality outcomes will continue to be progressed and outcome leads will continue to meet to ensure strategic support for implementation is responsive and timely.
- 5.3 Lothian Equality Partners will continue to explore opportunities for collaborative working where appropriate to progress outcomes.
- 5.4 Governance will be reviewed to reflect changes in political and operational arrangements.
- 5.5 A 2 year interim progress report will be submitted to Committee and published before the end of April 2023 as per statutory guidelines.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 It is expected that any additional cost in progressing the equality outcomes will be met from existing resources. Culture and Communities Committee in February 2022 approved a further years funding of £40k from The City of Edinburgh Council for EaRN to continue to support our engagement with stakeholders. EaRN also continue to receive a further £5K funding from NHS Lothian.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Whilst restrictions have been in place there has been engagement with Council staff networks over the last 12 months to promote and raise awareness of the Framework, answer questions and gather feedback. This together with the planned on-going engagement and relationship building with stakeholders will inform the work to progress equality outcomes. Our statutory progress report in April 2023 will propose any changes arising from this engagement.

- 7.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025 and was considered in April 2021 when the Framework was approved by the Policy and Sustainability Committee.
- 7.3 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out against the Equalities Engagement Plan. There are no carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development relating to this report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [The City of Edinburgh Council's Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025 and alternative formats](#)
- 8.2 [The Policy and Sustainability Committee report of 20 April 2021 on The Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025](#)
- 8.3 [Integrated Impact Assessment for Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-2025](#)
- 8.4 [Integrated Impact Assessment for equalities engagement plan](#)
- 8.5 [Policy and Sustainability Committee report of 22 February 2022 on The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\) in Scotland: consultation response on Stage 2 of the review](#)

9. Appendices

None