
Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP)

Date: 9 June 2021

Subject: **Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To adhere to the commitment within the LEP Equality & Diversity Policy & Statement (EDS) that it be reviewed by the Board as a minimum every year at the Board's annual meeting and any changes or recommendations are to be agreed by the Board. The current Statement is at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The EDS commits to the Board receiving an annual report outlining the measures taken in connection with Board and sub group membership recruitment and therefore contained within this report are details of these measures and subsequent outcomes of any Board and Panels refresh conducted since the last annual meeting in September 2020.
- 1.3 The EDS also requires that at its annual meeting, the Board identifies a member of the Board to act as **Diversity Champion**.

2 Information

- 2.1 Within the Local Assurance Framework submitted in March 2017 a new expectation was that each LEP must set out its rules governing its commitment to diversity. This includes a diversity statement explaining how the LEP will look to ensure diverse representation at Board and sub group level which is also reflective of their local business community, including geographies and protected characteristics. Revisions to the Assurance Framework arising from the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal for a Mayoral Combined Authority to be established were approved by the LEP Board at their November 2020 meeting and this EDS commitment remained.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines the following as "protected characteristics": age, disability; gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation.
- 2.3 The EDS is to be reviewed annually and this last took place at the September 2020 Annual meeting when a commitment to ensure that the Board was compliant with the National Assurance Framework (NAF) and Government's 'Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships' (Strengthened LEPs) review, by 31 March 2020 in regard to Leadership and capacity **was met**. This

requirement was to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of the Board are women and that the Board should otherwise reflect the diversity of the City Region. There is a further expectation for equal representation by 2023 and in future Member refresh and recruitment campaigns the LEP will strive to achieve this requirement by 2023, if not before.

Composition of the Board

- 2.4 The table in **Appendix 2** details the composition of the Board.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the requirements of the NAF and Strengthened LEPs, a recruitment exercise was carried out in Spring 2020 to ensure that the diversity and representation stipulations were met. The recruitment process focused particularly on driving inclusive leadership, with specialist measures to increase diversity resulting in a Board composition which **met the requirements** of both the NAF and the Strengthened LEPs review and the commitment of the Board at their February 2020 meeting to the diversity agenda that by 2020 at least one third of members of the LEP Board are women.
- 2.6 The LEP will continue to monitor the composition of its Board and Panels in this regard in order to enhance these measures and will seek to redress any imbalances through proactive targeted recruitment.
- 2.7 In accordance with the Diversity Statement all private sector members of the Board and its sub groups received equality and diversity overview training in August 2020. This training is to be provided every three years or whenever deemed necessary and was previously carried out in June 2018.

Appointment of private sector LEP Board Members to CA Committees

- 2.8 Recruitment of private sector Panel Members also took place alongside that of the Board in Spring 2020. These appointments resulted in the total number of private sector members of the LEP (Board and Panels) being 40, 14 of which are women (35% of total private sector members).
- 2.9 Since the recruitment exercise in Spring 2020 to ensure that the diversity and representation stipulations and requirements of the NAF and Strengthened LEPs being met, the following Board members have also been appointed as Panel members:

Board Member:	Panel:	Appointment date:
Helen Featherstone	Place Panel	September 2020
Kamran Rashid	Inclusive Growth & Public Policy Panel	September 2020
Kully Thiarai	Inclusive Growth & Public Policy Panel	September 2020
Mandy Ridyard	Business Innovation & Growth Panel	April 2021

- 2.10 In addition, eleven existing Panel members' terms of office were due to expire in December 2020. To ensure continuity at that time whilst work was still underway in relation to the West Yorkshire devolution deal and MCA ready preparations, it was approved by the Board at their November 2020 meeting to extend these Panel members' terms of office by **one further year** in order to continue to reflect the local business community, including geographies and protected characteristics on these Panels.

LEP Diversity Champion

- 2.11 The role of the LEP's Diversity Champion is to ensure that the Board understands its role in promoting diversity and inclusion and eliminating discrimination, providing appropriate challenge and highlighting opportunities.
- 2.12 Since Board approval at its February 2020 meeting, Kate Hainsworth has fulfilled the role of the LEP's Diversity Champion, and has also been a voting member of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel. The EDS requires that at its annual meeting, the Board identifies a member of the Board to act as **Diversity Champion**. It is therefore proposed that Kate Hainsworth continues in this position.

Next steps on recruitment beyond 2021

- 2.13 In future a key, but not exclusive, focus will be to attract business leaders within the digital, creative, health, care sectors and social enterprise and to have high regard for our Diversity and Equality Policy. The requirement of equal gender representation on the Board will also apply for all future recruitment campaigns. Further to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (2019) the EDS statement acts as our commitment to strive for equal gender representation on the LEP Board by 2023, if not before.
- 2.14 We will continue to research and reach out to ethnic minority groups and women in business networks to attract a greater diversity of applicants for future recruitment campaigns. The LEP will continue to strive to do more proactive engagement to build on these networks, including those linked to ethnic minority business communities.
- 2.15 Also in preparation for the next recruitment campaign, and to ensure full consideration of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement during this process, members of future Interview Panels will in turn also receive more in depth diversity and equality briefing, ahead of conducting future interviews.
- 2.16 Going forward, the LEP will continue to monitor the composition of its Board in this regard to enhance these measures and will seek to redress any imbalances through proactive targeting.
- 2.17 Following the Inclusive Growth Panel's proposed dissolution and the intention for inclusive growth to be a 'golden thread' through all Committees, it is proposed that each Committee will have an Inclusivity Champion. They will be tasked with building on the approach already agreed under the Panel structure, to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is fully embedded in the objectives of the committees. Options are being developed for bringing together the individual Champions on an advisory basis. Each Committee will

have dashboard indicators from the Inclusive Growth Framework embedded in their work.

- 2.18 The Mayor has also suggested that each Committee's Inclusive Growth Champion might work collectively with an Inclusivity Champion proposed as part of her manifesto pledges to ensure the Region's recovery benefits all.

Wider Equality and Diversity activities overseen and/or involving the Diversity Champion

Policy development

- 2.19 Since the last report to Board members in September 2020, the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel (on which the LEP Diversity Champion also sits as a voting member) has continued in its role of advising the LEP Board and Combined Authority on policy in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion matters, including in the context of issues around the pandemic and the regional economic recovery planning work led by the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board.
- 2.20 In December, the Panel finalised the draft Inclusive Growth Framework for the region to promote well-being, the acquisition of relevant and transferable skills, inclusive digital and transport connectivity, and good work for everyone, with an overall view to delivering an inclusive economic recovery.
- 2.21 LEP Board members endorsed the Framework in January as part of the wider SEF, and it was adopted by the Combined Authority in March. Members may recall the LEP Board welcomed the Framework's goals and ambitions to address socio-economic inequalities and agreed the following:
- The need for Inclusive Growth to be fully embedded into the region's assurance framework to ensure all funded interventions drive inclusive outcomes and equality.
 - Recognition of the key role of the third sector, working with the public and private sectors, in ensuring an inclusive economic recovery.
 - Support for the proposed working indicator set to performance manage the delivery of Inclusive Growth, with proposals to also include healthy years of life as a key measure of progress, an "early years" wellbeing measure, and compare the proposed indicators against World Happiness Report indicators.
 - Within each headline indicator, there is also a need seek to understand the disproportionate impact of the pandemic eg, on unemployed young people and over 50s, disabled people, and some ethnic minority groups.
 - There was also strong support expressed for a pipeline of proposed Inclusive Growth interventions, and in February the Board's in-principle support was agreed for a short list of 'early win' interventions, including support for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector, the development of a Good Work Standard, and the measures to promote broader workforce wellbeing, including Social Prescribing.

- 2.22 It was recognised that the new Framework will need to strongly shape and inform the ongoing work of all Panels and Committees. And it was agreed by the LEP that a section for 'Inclusive Growth Implications' should be included in all future reports. These, and other measures, including: the use of appropriate Inclusive Growth indicators to performance manage the work of Panels and Committees; the identification of Inclusive Growth Champions for each Panel/Committee; and the proposed appointment by the Mayor of an Inclusivity Champion for the region, will all help to ensure that the region's recovery benefits everyone.

Learning and development

- 2.23 Subsequent to the delivery of a pilot session on unconscious bias with members of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel on 4th December 2020 - potentially as a model to be rolled out to other regional Panels, Committees and Boards - Government Ministers announced its conclusion that unconscious bias training does not achieve its intended aims and it will therefore be phased out in the Civil Service. Government encouraged other public sector employers, including Local Authorities, to do likewise. Government's preferred approach going forward is to integrate principles for inclusion and diversity into mainstream core training and leadership learning modules in a manner which facilitates positive behaviour change. It was also announced that a new strategy setting out the preferred approach of Government - with a stronger focus on engaging measurable action - will be published this year. It is anticipated that the strategy, once published, will inform our approach to providing related learning and development to Committee and Board members that promotes greater diversity and inclusion.

Research and Intelligence

- 2.24 The development of the Inclusive Growth Framework's working dashboard of indicators has placed a spotlight on various limitations in data availability, in particular in terms of the granularity and statistical reliability of core Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey products, such as the Annual Population Survey and Labour Force Survey which provide little if any insight at regional level on disadvantaged groups which therefore constrains our understanding of the role and contribution of these groups and how we can work with and support them. And other flagship ONS surveys – such as the Wellbeing Survey – are typically designed to provide national insight and provide little by way of regional or local insight. Whilst it is recognised that there are practical limitations which ONS face in improving the reliability (which recognises the sample sizes underpinning key surveys) it is considered that more focus could be given to issue of intersectionality, ie improving data on individuals with multiple characteristics, particularly those in multiple disadvantaged groups across ONS core survey's and data products.
- 2.25 West Yorkshire Combined Authority therefore responded to UK Statistics Authority's recent Inclusive Data Consultation, highlighting key policy issues and themes which would benefit from improved data at regional level, including:

- The economic contribution of the third sector, including structure, composition, employment and turnover data, given its role in driving an inclusive economic recovery.
- Improved data on the socio-economic characteristics of ethnic minority groups and communities.
- Generally more reliable baseline data and intelligence for all people and groups defined under protected characteristics – by extension much better socio-economic appreciation of these groups and their participation the labour market.

2.26 In recognition of the third sector's role in working in partnership with the public and private sectors in delivering an inclusive economic recovery, and the limited availability of national data sets, research has been commissioned to measure the scale of the region's third sector and its overall economic impact. It is anticipated that the research will be complete in the Summer with the view of helping to inform our inclusive growth policy.

The LEP/Combined Authority as an employer

2.27 Internally the organisation has continued to improve the profile of diversity issues within the workforce and our profile as an employer. These measures have included:

- The successful roll out a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion intranet site detailing our work on diversity, and how staff across the organisation are working to ensure that we become a more diverse organisation.
- Established a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic network group of officers supported by and with links to the Senior Leadership Team. This group is helping the organisation to evolve and improve its internal culture and working practices.
- Establishment of a Gender Equality Group which has already made recommendations to the Senior Management Team which have been adopted e.g. created a caregivers survey to identify the key issues facing staff during the COVID-19 lockdowns and proposed solutions. SLT considered the outcomes and agreed some temporary adjustments to the organisations flexible working arrangements in order to support staff with caregiving responsibilities.
- Imminent established of an LGBTQIA+ group to bring staff together and support the organisation in tackling issues of discrimination and inclusivity relating to sexual orientation.
- Enhancing the role of a Senior Leadership Team Diversity Champion by embedding this in all diversity and equality groups throughout the organisation.
- Established a Public Sector Equality Duty compliance group which is developing an action plan to include more explicit embedding of the PSED in our decision-making processes.
- Delivered the first of an expected series of training on the Public Sector Equality Duty, which around 180 staff have attended to date.
- Reviewed and refreshed recruitment processes which have now been rolled out to improve the diversity of the organisation.

- Reinforcement of the requirement of Equality Impact Assessments and the relevant training provided to staff.
- Ongoing commitment to provide training on unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion.
- Diverse images are now common place in our communications and on our communication channels
- We are committed to continuing our efforts to be an organisation that celebrates and promotes diversity.

2.28 The Senior Leadership is also producing a new vision for the organisation's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, about which it is going to consult staff.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 It is proposed that the committee responsible for tackling the climate emergency will have an inclusivity champion, whose role will be to support the committee in ensuring that equality and inclusivity are embedded within its objectives.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 As set out above, particularly at 2.21, the LEP has recently adopted an Inclusive Growth framework and indicator set to drive and measure delivery.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 The whole report above is about improving the LEP's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion issues. Whilst this has always been important, it is known that the pandemic has had a disproportionate affect on certain communities and widened inequalities. This work is a key priority for the LEP going forward.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 None.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None.

8 Staffing Implications

8.1 None.

9 External Consultees

9.1 None.

10 Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Board notes and provides any comments on the contents of this report.
- 10.2 That the Board approves the attached Equality & Diversity Policy & Statement which forms part of the LEP's Assurance Framework.
- 10.3 That the Board approves Kate Hainsworth to continue in the position of LEP Diversity Champion.

11 Background Documents

- 11.1 None.

12 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Equality and Diversity Policy including Diversity Statement

Appendix 2 - Board composition