

Report to: Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee

Date: 1 December 2021

Subject: **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

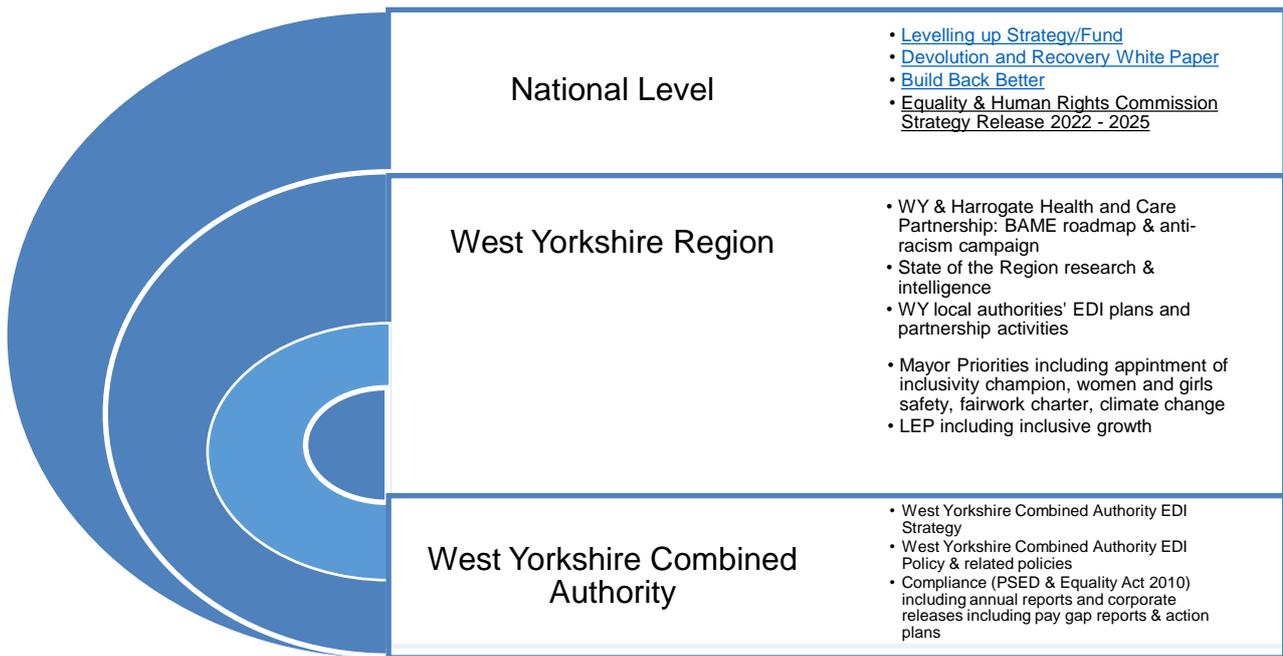
1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update of the work to embed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into the work of the Combined Authority.

2. EDI overview

- 2.1 EDI strategy cannot be seen as a standalone function/strategy for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority but more an important framework to mainstream EDI and fully embed it in all work undertaken including providing services to people, employing people and in shaping the place that we live and work. The Combined Authority is currently developing an EDI strategy, which will offer such a framework to mainstream fully embed EDI in all work undertaken. The EDI strategy will:

- Shape key priorities and work toward cradling a progressive & evolving culture
- Build on best practise, particularly from local authorities and partners
- Build skills, knowledge and understanding of services that will improve the evidence base for determining local EDI priorities
- Strengthen capabilities within the organisation and the region
- Deliver new strategies for community engagement, access, and participation



Establishing the Combined Authority's EDI Ambition

- 2.2 In order to establish what the Combined Authority wants to achieve regarding EDI, a review has been undertaken of existing action plans to consolidate the work and create appropriate governance and reporting structures to track progress. The EDI governance arrangements will gain insight and understanding, engagement, support, and drive action towards setting EDI objectives and outcomes.
- 2.3 As part of this work, an EDI Vision and Statement has been adopted following consultation with staff. The Vision and Statement are provided below:
- 2.3.1 **EDI Vision** - *The Combined Authority's vision is to be a leader recognised nationally for our focus and commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion.*
- 2.3.2 **EDI Statement** - *The West Yorkshire Combined Authority celebrates the difference of all the people we serve, work with and employ. The organisation will hold itself to the highest standards in relation to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion and we will evidence our commitment in the following ways:*
- *The Combined Authority will not tolerate behaviours, actions or words that discriminate on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or disability.*
 - *All training for staff on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion will be mandatory.*
 - *All staff will be set an annual objective about how they must promote Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in their work, and we will monitor compliance of line managers with this requirement*

- *We will monitor and report the protected characteristics of our staff to ensure we represent the communities we serve, and we will set targets where analysis shows we have more work to do.*
- *We will monitor and report use of our services to ensure fair and equal access in line with the census data and we will set targets where we identify gaps*

Compliance with this statement is non-negotiable and any staff member found to have breached our policies will be dealt with under the Combined Authority's disciplinary policy.

EDI Strategic Headlines

- 2.4 It is recognised that the Combined Authority has some way to go before it meets the vision to be recognised as a national leader on EDI. It is important to start by building a strong foundation with a focus on recovering, rebuilding, and strengthening the organisation in order to achieve longer term, sustainable outcomes. This will be achieved through a two-year project focussed on delivering key outputs against the Local Government Equality Framework. Contact has been made with officers within each local authority within West Yorkshire to ensure this work builds on existing best practice.

Equality Framework for Local Government and complimentary accreditations

- 2.5 The framework standard that the Combined Authority is working to is the Equality Framework for Local Government which is the standard against which the Combined Authority will be audited. However, further consideration is also being given to adopting complimentary accreditations that focus on particular EDI challenges.

Establishment of two EDI projects

- 2.6 A significant amount of work is required both on internal staffing matters and external delivery of policy and services across the entire organisation. To manage the breadth of work that is required, ensure appropriate and effective representation of project boards and to ensure the efficient use of staff time, two projects are being established, one with an internal focus and one with an external focus.

- 2.7 The internal EDI project will include but not be limited to:

- Vision and outcomes, KPIs (parallel with external)
- EDI governance arrangements
- Role of CA staff network groups
- Recruitment policy and practice
- Staff progression/support
- Learning and Development

- Wider learning
- Further actions from EDI working group action plan, gap analysis with EFLG and further accreditations
- Revision of EDI policy, strengthened to support the breadth of EDI including EDI monitoring and consultation and engagement, and procurement
- Collating all EDI Action Plans into one lens for effectively capturing risks, monitoring the distribution of actions and linking synergies

2.8 The external EDI project will include but not be limited to:

- Vision and outcomes, KPIs (parallel with internal)
- Data
- Policy and outreach – including identifying good practice within local authorities, which can be built upon
- Events and speaking
- Further actions from EDI working group action plan, gap analysis with EFLG and further accreditations
- Contributing to inclusive growth activities
- Supporting the inclusivity champion recruitment, development and progress
- Contributing to work on the climate change emergency
- Links to Policing and Crime and supporting the ongoing women and girls safety work, whilst recognising intersectional experiences
- In general, understand links and interdependencies of Mayoral pledges, and the EDI frameworks Policing & Crime adhere to
- Quality and inclusive consultation and engagement
- Scoping how EDI is presented in plans, and searching where roles and responsibilities should be distributed to maximise influence and ensure Senior Responsible Officers are equipped with an EDI lens at key committees

EDI Corporate Culture Developments

- 2.9 The Combined Authority currently has three staff network groups: Embrace (for BAME staff), Proud@WYCA and Gender Equality Group. Staff network groups are critical for providing safe spaces for colleagues as well as evolving how the Combined Authority steers EDI. A disability network is also currently being established.
- 2.10 There are additional staff groups at the Combined Authority, who operate differently than the staff network groups. This includes: Mental Health First Aiders, Green Champions, and the Employee Engagement Panel.
- 2.11 Each of the staff networks are working through a period of development, whereby a network group may have an agreed action plan, or are, shaping an action plan. Each action plan formed, can be synergised with the broader EDI work in encouraging collaboration and extending the message that all colleagues at the Combined Authority are responsible for EDI.

2.12 For example, Embrace staff network group, have co-designed an action plan in response to the ethnicity pay gap (attached at Appendix 1) and have delivered powerful campaigns including Black History Month:365. As part of the Black History Month:365 activities, and working with internal communications, the network shared:

- Stories from their members
- Hidden black Britons; influential black figures we should have known about
- All staff panel event delivered via Microsoft Teams,
- Resources: Embrace staff network details, a number of recorded contents that supported insight into black community's stories, as well as understanding key concepts like privilege, and anti-racism, a guide to allyship, a guide on microaggressions, be brave with language guidance, CIPD's line managers responsibilities in tackling racism in the workplace, and an internal designed team activity on race and privilege (inspired by *We are not really strangers*)
- Call to action as part of the Black History Month:365 campaign, for all to engage with the material shared including watching the videos, making use of the team activity, and encouraging all to draw on the following when coming across unfamiliar areas:
 - *Thank you for correcting me, I didn't realise*
 - *I hadn't thought about it like that – I understand now*
 - *I was wrong about that and I have changed my mind*
 - *Can I ask some questions to help me understand*
 - *We'll continue to update this page into November with new insights and information.*

The campaign was supported by the introduction of the evaluation Form, aimed at capturing feedback, activity adoption of related Black History Month:365 content, as well as thoughts and ideas in strengthening campaigns going forward.

2.13 The Black History Month:365 team activity was adopted in different forms among teams who have ran dedicated sessions. The sessions were guided by restorative principles that are underpinned by listening and not action orientated sessions. The emphasis on enabling teams to develop and respond to EDI related movements, whilst subsequently, enhancing the inclusive culture among teams, across the Combined Authority. Essentially, teams navigating learning and development techniques that strengthen confidence and understanding in engaging with EDI.

EDI Learning & Development

2.14 At a broader level, EDI training developments are ongoing which will expand on the current eLearning which is completed as part of induction. The EDI training will form the Combined Authority's mandatory training that all staff (new and present) will be required to complete.

- 2.15 In November the Combined Authority piloted equality impact assessment training, delivered by SOLACE. The training had 50 attendees, which reflected diverse areas of the Combined Authority.
- 2.16 During the training, feedback was encouraged on the revised equality impact assessment toolkit, and the training itself, which is currently being worked through to best shape further equality impact assessment training going forward, that meets the needs of Combined Authority colleagues.

EDI & Working With One Another

- 2.17 In line with research and intelligence and inclusive participation, the aspect of lived experiences internal and external engagement will be critical to tackle EDI matters in how the Combined Authority delivers services. The consultation and engagement team have developed an *About You* survey which includes equality profiling to better understand any disparities within the region. This includes a required set of equality questions that have been agreed following feedback from staff network groups, and the EDI Working Group.
- 2.18 The questions reflect the Census 2021 equality monitoring to enable comparable measurements to be made. A set of additional equality questions, which will be used as appropriate are also being developed and will follow similar consultation activities.
- 2.19 This work supports ongoing engagement strategy/framework building for the Combined Authority in supporting different levels of engagement activities to plan service delivery and design (i.e., informing, consulting, participating, co-creating) and when these are appropriate.
- 2.20 In addition work is underway to improve our local data and advocate where there are challenges in capturing EDI monitoring information. This data led approach needs to be applied to programmes of work, plans and policies. We must consider EDI matters and promoting good relations as part of our day-to-day practice. This means that EDI considerations should be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, and Equality Impact Assessments will be used to assist with this further.
- 2.21 Work is ongoing to mainstream EDI planning as part of the Combined Authority's service plans to develop a process whereby EDI analysis is fed into planning and assessment of service plans.
- 2.22 This includes emphasis in adopting equality impact assessments. Recently, the Combined Authority has revised the Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit, to strengthen guidance in the toolkit, and the quality application of equality impact assessments.
- 2.23 The officers developing the guidance are also working with partners, including local authorities, to steer a shared response and collaborative action in pressing with inclusion for the region.

- 2.24 Additional work is progressing aligned to the procurement strategy considerations in line with the Social Value Act and Public Sector Equality Duty ensuring that procurement and commissioning processes and practice take account of the diverse needs of citizens. The Strategy could develop/strengthen mechanisms to put in place to ensure that EDI standards are embedded throughout the procurement cycle.

Combined Authority EDI Next Steps

- 2.25 Carrying out a gap analysis against the Local Government Equality Framework (which captures internal and external).
- 2.26 Drafting the project documents for the internal and external projects including scope, outputs, roles and responsibilities, incorporating the existing action plans as appropriate. This will support with scoping of EDI national, vs regional vs local authority EDI plans.
- 2.27 Establish the two project boards and continue to work concurrently on agreeing outcomes/KPIs for both internal and external projects.
- 2.28 Consolidated EDI strategy, that has clear anchors by level (EDI Governance) and clearly defined drivers and absorbs the two year 'recover, rebuild and strengthen' mission to support and achieve the vision for the Combined Authority.
- 2.29 Appointing an Inclusivity Champion is a Mayoral pledge and will be key to the success of the external EDI project (it should be noted however, that the appointment is being dealt with separately).

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report. However, strengthening EDI efforts contributes to understanding the implications of climate change among citizens in West Yorkshire. For example, marginalised citizens in our societies who are evidenced to be hard hit by the impact of climate change. Further, in achieving the mission to tackle the climate emergency, diversity of people, experience and thought are essential.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct inclusive growth benefits or implications arising from this report however improvements in EDI are intrinsically linked to the delivery of inclusive growth.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The EDI implications are set out in full in the information section to this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. although as raised in the paper, resource support for project and programme management will be required, and EDI training programme is associated with the learning and development budget.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and wider society. It introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Combined Authority (together with all public bodies and those carrying out public functions) to consider individuals with protected characteristics when shaping policy and delivering services. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- 7.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require the Combined Authority to prepare and publish one or more objectives linked to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.3 Any failure to comply with those obligations could leave the Combined Authority exposed to enforcement action from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, legal challenge to decision making by way of Judicial Review or claims for monetary damages from individuals affected.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report. Although it should be noted that project board will require project manager support, and that the internal EDI project will require significant input from HR, with both the internal and external projects requiring input from Communications.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken. Although networking with groups is ongoing, including the Urban Transport Group and the West Yorkshire Equality and Diversity Network. Support with EDI progress at the Combined Authority and efforts to expand on the networks is welcomed.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the progress made to embed EDI through the work of the Combined Authority is noted.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Ethnicity Pay Gap and associated action plan