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

Date: 15 June 2022

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

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To approve the LEP Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy & Statement (EDIS). The revised Statement is at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the work to embed EDI into the work of the Combined Authority and LEP and key next steps.

2. Information

LEP and EDI

- 2.1 Within the Local Assurance Framework it is expected 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. The revised LEP Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy & Statement is provided at **Appendix 1** for comment and endorsement.
- 2.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty was introduced in April 2011, under the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that all public bodies contribute to making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all and requires us, in the exercise of our functions (anything new being developed or planned, any change or anything being stopped), to have due regard to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 define the following as protected characteristics: age, disability; gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- 2.4 Following the annual meeting in 2021, there is a continued requirement to ensure that at least one third of members of the Board are women and that the Board should reflect the diversity of the City Region. Ongoing efforts for enriching the diversity board composition continue, including the recruitment campaigns where the LEP strive to achieve this requirement

Composition of the Board

- 2.5 The table in **Appendix 2** details the composition of the Board.
- 2.6 The LEP will continue to monitor the composition of its Board and Committees in this regard in order to enhance these measures and will seek to redress any imbalances through proactive targeted recruitment.

LEP Diversity Champion

- 2.7 The role of the LEP's Diversity Champion is to ensure that the Board understands its role in championing EDI and eliminating discrimination, providing challenge and highlighting opportunities.
- 2.8 Since Board approval at its February 2020 meeting, Kate Hainsworth has fulfilled the role of the LEPs Diversity Champion. Following Kate Hainsworth's confirmation to step down from the position, the EDIS requires that the Board identifies a member of the Board to act as **Diversity Champion**, as per agenda item 2.

The LEP & Combined Authority EDI Progress

- 2.25 Internally the organisation has continued to improve the profile of diversity issues within the workforce and our profile as an employer. Embedding EDI is the responsibility of all employees working within the LEP and Combined Authority.
- 2.26 EDI strategy and associated actions cannot be seen as a standalone function 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 and region that we live and work.
- 2.27 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) help the LEP and Combined Authority to evidence and demonstrate that we understand how our decisions, policies and services affect employees, people who use our services and shows we have identified any negative impact and eliminated or mitigated this impact in any as far as possible and have actively considered how what we do might support the advancement of equality and the promotion of good relations between different groups of people.
- 2.28 The Combined Authority has adopted a new vision, statement and framework on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

“CA's EDI Vision

The Combined Authority's vision is to be a leader recognised nationally for our focus and commitment to EDI.

CA's 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.

CA's EDI Framework

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. The framework underpins the approach which 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.

Our renewed EDI focus outlines our commitment to attracting, nurturing and retaining a diverse and talented workforce. It challenges us all to think proactively and through an intersectional lens about how we support and embed inclusion within our organisation because that will also affect how we proactively work with our communities. The changes may take time to be felt, though we are committed to evolving what we do and how we do it, to recover, rebuild and strengthen our EDI approach and subsequently, be the change we want to feel at the CA. The key to achieving the vision for EDI at the CA, is the responsibility of all of us and supported by collaboration. We encourage everyone to actively engage with the EDI strategy and develop ways in which you can collaboratively embed EDI in your environments. “

2.29 Further measures over the last twelve months have included:

- Publication of our new annual State of the Region report including a supplement about the State of the Region from the perspective of Women

and Girls. The 2022 report will also look at the State of the Region from other diverse perspectives.

- Development of agreement of indicator sets for each committee including inclusive growth indicators, which will be regularly reported to each committee meeting.
- Development and implementation of Enterprise West Yorkshire programmes to support entrepreneurs – with targets around diversity.
- Published report into the structure and impact of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in West Yorkshire, showing total economic added value of between £3.1bn and £4bn.
- Embedding EDI within the delivery of Mayoral pledges.
- Ongoing development of a Fair Work Charter, with the Steering Group chaired by Kate Hainsworth, the LEP Diversity champion.
- Advancing proposals for an Inclusivity Champion for the region.
- Embedding of EDI as a central aim within the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy
- The continued successful roll out of 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.
- Continued development of our internal staff network groups and supporting campaigns:
 - Embrace – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
 - Gender Equality – open to all genders
 - Proud@WYCA – LGBTQIA+; and Proud Allies
 - Newly launched: WeCan – Staff with Disabilities and those who support disability inclusion
- Evolved the *About You* questions for consultation and engagement to enable more inclusive categories, monitoring and transparent reporting
- EDI monitoring among businesses the LEP and CA support.
- Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports and Associated Action Plans
- EDI training programme tender including introduction to EDI, Inclusive Leadership and Equality Impact Assessment training
- Revised EqIA Toolkit and launch
- Partnership building, West Yorkshire Public Sector EDI Network, Channel 4, and local focused EDI networks e.g., Kirklees Diversity=Innovation Network
- EDI foundations project
- EDI embedded in comms internally via an EDI hub and knowledge centre, and externally an ongoing website accessibility review.
- Supported Directorates with EDI embedding across business plans and corporate priorities
- Recruitment and diversity policy - toolkit & new recruitment platform: [Vercida](#)
- Membership refresh of the EDI Working Group
- Local groups forming outside of the EDI Working Group, including Transport Policy EDI Working Group, Delivery's Inclusive Growth group, and more recently, Economic Services EDI group

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. 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. Improvements in the LEP and Combined Authority approach to EDI are intrinsically linked to the delivery of inclusive growth.
- 4.2. As set out above, 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 EDI implications are set out in full in the information section. The whole report above is about strengthening the LEP's approach to EDI. Whilst this has always been important, it is known that the pandemic has had a disproportionate affect on diverse communities and exacerbated inequalities. This work is a key priority for the LEP going forward.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

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 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 LEP and 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.

9. External Consultees

9.1. No external consultations have been undertaken.

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 EDI Policy & Statement.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy including Diversity Statement

Appendix 2 - Board composition