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**Report to:** West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**Date:** 23 June 2022

**Subject:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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**Director:** Alan Reiss, Director of Strategy, Communications and Policing

**Author:** Jonathan Stephen, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

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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.
- 1.2 To adopt definitions of Antisemitism and Islamophobia / Anti-Muslim prejudice
- 1.3 To provide insight into key next steps to be undertaken by the Combined Authority to achieve its vision for EDI.

## 2. Background information

### Current approach

- 2.1 The Combined Authority adopted an EDI vision and statement in October 2021. The vision and statement is provided at Appendix I.
- 2.2 Achieving the vision for EDI is the responsibility of all employees, therefore the CA's EDI strategy cannot be seen as a standalone function but more an important framework to mainstream EDI and fully embed it in all work undertaken. This includes providing services to people, employing people and in shaping the place and region that we live and work.

- 2.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty was introduced in April 2011, under the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all and requires us, in the exercise of our functions (so anything new being developed or planned, anything we change or anything we stop doing), to have due regard to the need 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.
- 2.4 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) help the 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.
- 2.5 An EqIA toolkit has been developed, and co-designed by the EDI Working Group members, including Staff Network Groups. This revised version intends to empower an integrated approach to EDI as well as support colleagues in applying the EqIA process.
- 2.6 The EqIA toolkit will be continuously improved to support not only best practice but best fit for colleagues across the CA and wider, and will be influential to the EDI objectives linked in Business plans across the CA.
- 2.7 Additional responsibilities include the CA updating Equality Objectives. The [CA's Equality Objectives](#) 2022-2024 have therefore been refreshed that also reflect synergies with related EDI plans, the underpinning framework and the CA's EDI ambitions in working together for an inclusive West Yorkshire:
1. Champion Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion externally and develop an excellent regional and national reputation
  2. Consult and engage with our people, communities, and businesses to understand their diverse needs and ensure our services meet their needs
  3. Ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of West Yorkshire

## **EDI Progress**

- 2.8 Considerable progress has been made over the past year, with the following in place/in progress to support embedding EDI:
- Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report and associated action plans
  - EDI training tender including introduction to EDI to be in place by September 2022

- Staff Network Groups campaigns and intersectionality in collaboration (Gender Equality, Embrace, PROUD@WYCA, WeCan)
- Revised EqIA Toolkit and launch, and exploring electronic ways for submission and quality check
- Partnership building, West Yorkshire Public Sector EDI Network, Channel 4, and local focused EDI networks e.g., Kirklees Diversity=Innovation Network
- EDI foundations and staff network group terms of reference project (with external support from Pinsent Mason, Brook Graham) aimed at strengthening the EDI governance
- EDI and communications embedded internally via an EDI Hub which reflects all CA corporate activities including a series of reports, videos and podcasts aligned to diverse areas including embedding EDI in transport and climate change.
- Ongoing external website accessibility review.
- Supported Directorates with EDI embedding across business plans
- Recruitment and diversity policy – toolkit developed & career platform: [Vercida](#) introduced
- 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 Working Group
- Evolved the *About You* questions and monitoring focus among businesses the CA supports
- EDI cross cutting theme in new Corporate Plan

### **EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2024**

- 2.9 An EDI Strategy and associated action plan is currently being developed, with the strategic focus being on recover, rebuild and strengthen. Further detail will be provided at a future meeting.
- 2.10 The renewed strategy and the focus on recovery, rebuilding and strengthening proposes five priority areas:
- 1) Embedding EDI
  - 2) EDI Foundations
  - 3) Inclusive People and Culture
  - 4) Our Tone of Voice
  - 5) Champion EDI Externally and Develop an Excellent Regional and National Reputation (with a view to establish/feed into an existing West Yorkshire EDI Conference (late 2023/early 2024).
- 2.11 In addition, the EDI strategy will consolidate related plans to respond to interdependencies. Currently, interdependencies include the pay gap action plans, the SLT ten-point action plan, as well as accreditations/charters held by the Combined Authority.

## **Adoption of definitions of Islamophobia and Antisemitism**

- 2.12 West Yorkshire is a diverse place with a rich history and people from many different backgrounds. As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, it is good practice to adopt definitions of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. Doing so is supported by a range of partners and stakeholders, and is in common with many local authorities nationally.
- 2.13 Further detail is provided below for consideration. Once adopted the definitions will be added to the Combined Authority's website. It should be noted that further definitions regarding religious intolerance may be brought forward for consideration once further work and engagement has been undertaken.
- 2.14 This work has been informed by the work and local consultation already undertaken by the West Yorkshire local authorities.

### **Definition of Islamophobia / Anti-Muslim Prejudice**

- 2.15 In April 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims launched an inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia. In November 2018, following consultation with academics, lawyers, local and national elected officials, Muslim organisations, activists, campaigners and local Muslim communities, the APPG produced a report entitled “Islamophobia Defined”, which recommended the adoption of the following definition:

*“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”<sup>1</sup>*
- 2.16 In May 2019, the UK Government rejected the APPG definition of Islamophobia, firstly stating it was unnecessary, but then committing to their own process to agree a definition of the term.
- 2.17 Across the other MCAs, Liverpool City Region, Cambridge and Peterborough and Greater Manchester have adopted the APPG definition. South Yorkshire Combined Authority considered the definition and agreed its intention to adopt a working definition.
- 2.18 Within West Yorkshire, Calderdale has adopted the APPG definition, and Kirklees are considering adoption of the APPG definition. Wakefield has not published a public position on the definition. Bradford and Leeds have developed bespoke definitions.
- 2.19 In 2019, Bradford adopted the Bradford definition of Islamophobia. This definition has been informed by research (titled ‘Understanding Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate in Bradford) and resulted in the Joint Islamophobia

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<sup>1</sup> [Islamophobia+Defined.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.squarespace.com)

Definition Working Group being established.<sup>2</sup> The Bradford definition is as follows:

*"Islamophobia is a direct or indirect act(s) of hatred and discrimination against people (individuals or groups) of Islamic faith on grounds of their belief and practice.*

*This could manifest in:*

- *Inciting or carrying out acts of hatred and violence against people of the Islamic faith (Muslims).*
- *Direct or indirect acts of discrimination including policy and practice within organisations, which deny Muslims legitimate and fair access to opportunities, facilities and services because of their faith, beliefs and practice.*
- *Denying people of the Islamic faith the opportunity to practise their faith values, free of harassment, fear of violence against them or fear of incurring discrimination and hatred against them.*
- *Actions which perpetuate a climate of mistrust, fear and a sense of marginalisation about or within the Islamic community e.g. remarks by individuals and groups that can be made without fear of being held to account. Also use of print, social or electronic media to align and create fear and division surrounding the Muslim community."*

2.20 In 2020 Leeds undertook a consultation and subsequently adopted the following definition, which builds on the Bradford definition:

*"Anti-Muslim Prejudice is a direct or indirect act(s) of hatred and discrimination against people (individuals or groups) of Islamic faith on grounds of their belief and practice."*

*This could manifest in:*

- *Inciting or carrying out acts of racism, hatred and violence against people, and those perceived to be, of the Islamic faith (Muslims).*
- *Direct or indirect acts of discrimination and exclusion including policy and practice within organisations, which deny Muslims legitimate, fair and equal access to opportunities, facilities and services because of their faith, beliefs and practice.*
- *Denying people of the Islamic faith the opportunity to practise their faith values, free of harassment, fear of violence against them or fear of incurring discrimination and hatred against them.*
- *Actions which perpetuate a climate of mistrust, fear and a sense of marginalisation about or within the Islamic community e.g. remarks by individuals and groups that can be made without fear of being held to account. Also use of print, social or electronic media to align and create fear and division surrounding the Muslim community."*

2.21 As there have been different approaches taken within West Yorkshire on the adoption of a definition of islamophobia, it is considered that the most

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<sup>2</sup> [Bradford Council - Decision - BRADFORD STANDS UP TO ISLAMOPHOBIA \(moderngov.co.uk\)](http://moderngov.co.uk)

appropriate option for the Combined Authority is to adopt a definition which combines the definitions adopted by Leeds and Bradford as set out below.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority definition of Islamophobia:

*“Islamophobia and/or Anti-Muslim Prejudice is a direct or indirect act(s) of hatred and discrimination against people (individuals or groups) of Islamic faith on grounds of their belief and practice.”*

*This could manifest in:*

- *Inciting or carrying out acts of racism, hatred and violence against people, and those perceived to be, of the Islamic faith (Muslims).*
- *Direct or indirect acts of discrimination and exclusion including policy and practice within organisations, which deny Muslims legitimate, fair and equal access to opportunities, facilities and services because of their faith, beliefs and practice.*
- *Denying people of the Islamic faith the opportunity to practise their faith values, free of harassment, fear of violence against them or fear of incurring discrimination and hatred against them.*
- *Actions which perpetuate a climate of mistrust, fear and a sense of marginalisation about or within the Islamic community e.g. remarks by individuals and groups that can be made without fear of being held to account. Also use of print, social or electronic media to align and create fear and division surrounding the Muslim community.”*

### **Definition of Antisemitism**

- 2.22 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to advance Holocaust education, remembrance, and research among its members and internationally.
- 2.23 In May 2016, the IHRA adopted the International Definition of Antisemitism, also known as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism. The full definition with examples is:

*“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.*

*Manifestations might include the targeting of the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectively. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.*

*Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:*

- *Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.*

- *Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.*
- *Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.*
- *Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).*
- *Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.*
- *Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*
- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination (e.g. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour).*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*
- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.*
- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*
- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.”*

- 2.24 The British Government adopted the IHRA definition in December 2016 and has encouraged leaders of all local authorities to do the same.
- 2.25 Within MCAs the definition has been adopted by Greater Manchester Combined Authority without examples, and in full by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 2.26 With regards to West Yorkshire Constituent Councils, the definition has been adopted in full, with examples, by Wakefield, Leeds and Bradford. Calderdale adopted the definition in January 2020.
- 2.27 It is proposed that the Combined Authority adopts the IHRA definition in full, with examples.
- 2.28 Once adopted, both definitions will be published on the Combined Authority website and communicated to stakeholders.

### **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 our approach to 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 background information section to this report.

#### **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 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.

#### **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 External consultation was carried as part of the development of definitions of Islamophobia undertaken by both Bradford and Leeds local authorities. This included a comprehensive range of local and national stakeholders, faith leaders and communities.
- 9.2 In addition, discussion and networking with relevant groups is ongoing, including the recently established West Yorkshire EDI Public Sector Network, Urban Transport Group OD network, the West Yorkshire Equality and Diversity

Network, Kirklees = Diversity & Innovation Network. Support with EDI progress at the Combined Authority and efforts to expand on the networks is welcomed.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Combined Authority notes the progress made to embed EDI through the work of the Combined Authority.
- 10.2 That the Combined Authority approves the adoption of the definitions of Islamophobia and Antisemitism provided above.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - EDI Vision and Statement