

# CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM 2021

## Workforce Equality Strategy

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	May 2022
<b>CLT Sponsor:</b>	Mandy Quayle, Director of People and Digital Services
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key strategic priority for the Council and we continue to develop and implement an action plan to prioritise and resource work in this area over the next five years.</p> <p>This report updates CLT on the position and progress at May 2022</p> <p>Strategic Priority <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Wide or Service “Big” Issue <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Cabinet Preview <input type="checkbox"/> Tactical Issue <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Performance Management <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Endorse the proposed action plan and support the individual tasks</li><li>2. Promote ED&amp;I training and development with your directorates.</li><li>3. To review and commit to the role asked of CLT members as outlined in 6.</li></ol>
<b>Resource Implications:</b>	<p>The workforce action plan is focused on internal employees and workers. The tasks will predominately be completed by the appointed OD advisor Chanté Watkins Organ and the Organisational Development Team supported by the employee networks.</p> <p>The working group has been re-established, with a clear structure of staff involved and their duties. Governance and accountability has been assigned to the roles including CLT who will receive quarterly updates regarding the progress of the action plan.</p>
<b>Consultees:</b>	HR/OD/Recruitment/Management Information Teams Trades Unions, Employee Voice Groups/Staff Networks
<b>Implications of Not Approving the Recommendation?</b>	<p>The previous <a href="#">Workforce Equality Reports</a>, staff surveys and the recent Race Equality Week Safe Space Talk have highlighted issues within the organisation regarding equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation. This includes how employees are feeling represented, supported and included in the County Council.</p> <p>To address the identified concerns GCC committed to a three year workforce equality diversity and inclusion plan.</p>

	<p>GCC has signed up to the <a href="#">Race at Work Charter</a> and completed a Stonewall submission in 2021 and achieved silver status. The organisation has a duty to continue to act upon the identified gaps.</p> <p>The range of ED&amp;I frameworks used to create and guide our strategy clearly state that senior leadership support is key for cultural change in an organisation. These frameworks include the <a href="#">LGA Equality Framework</a>, Race at Work Charter, MacGregor report and Stonewall.</p>
<p><b>Destination or Determination?</b></p>	<p>CLT are the final decision makers.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b></p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key part of the Workforce Strategy and a priority for the County Council. To make real change, we will need to commit to ongoing work for at least five years.</p> <p>The initial workforce equality plan was agreed by CLT in December 2020. It was designed to align with the Local Government Association Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Framework section ‘Diverse and Engaged Workforce’. The first year focused on getting some of the basic policies and frameworks in place; reviewing what it is we do. The tasks within the second year of the plan focus more on the how we do things, building upon the LGA EDI framework and utilise the Race at Work and McGregor Reports.</p> <p>This paper provides an update on the actions completed as part of the ED&amp;I workforce plan and the additional actions proposed for the second phase. It is structured around the five headings in the LGA framework – diverse and engagement workforce section.</p>
<p><b>Report:</b></p>	<p><b>1. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have reenergised the support for the networks and ensured a senior sponsor in place for each network. EDI issues have been discussed within Employee Voice Groups and Adults and Community Safety Directorates have specific equality and inclusions groups led by senior officers.</li> <li>• We have increased the profile of events to recognise events such as race equality week. We held safe space events including one with the Chief Executive targeted at employees from ethnic minority groups. We’ve taken feedback from these events into the plans for year two.</li> <li>• We’ve recognised that whilst the council is diverse overall, those with protected characteristics are under-represented at reward band grades. Initial steps towards positive action have been developed including involvement in Stepping Up and the ICS’ Flourish programmes.</li> <li>• ICT colleagues are meeting with the disabilities network in response to their priority around providing targeted equipment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more structured communication strategy comprised of</li> </ul>

awareness days, guest speakers, sharing good practice, network and senior sponsor profiles

- The development of internal coaching and mentoring opportunities to support the externally provided programme in order to support internal promotion.
- Development of guidance to support recruiting managers on positive action
- The wider revised recruitment approach will include campaigns targeted at under-represented groups and we will continue to promote apprenticeship and early career initiative to all groups including work experience placements.

The lack of diversity in senior positions in GCC was raised as an action to tackle in Safe Space and is also included in the initial plan. This is a complex issue that has many contributing factors, one of which is supporting the development of staff utilising positive action programmes.

The ongoing communication strategy will further support and help embed a culture change that celebrates, encourages, and reflects on ED&I within GCC and the wider community. The improvements to how we recruit staff, including apprentices will support the movement of our workforce becoming more representative of the community we serve. The development of managers guidance will equip recruiting managers with the tools to appropriately apply positive action legislation.

During our second year of work, we should consider whether we will adopt specific aspirational targets to increase the numbers of employees with protected characteristics in senior roles.

## **2. Inclusive strategies and policies**

- Our recruitment selection processes have been reviewed and improved. Job description guidance was updated to ensure managers removed the emphasis to 'fit' in, the gendered language used in descriptions, removing length of experience, the need for driving licence/own car and removal of the desirable categories. Managers' guidance was updated to encourage diverse interview panels.
- There is an ongoing review of all HR policies which are being updated to use more inclusive language taking advice and feedback from the networks and relevant agencies. Additional policies have been developed including the Trans Inclusion Policy and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- There has been analysis on staff who are subject to formal processes which has highlighted a disproportionate number of employees with protected characteristics, especially those from ethnic minorities and with disabilities.

### **Next Steps**

- Networking and building on development opportunities within the Integrated Care System and other partner agencies
- Continued review of key policies including a relaunch of the Dignity at Work, Anti Bullying Policy
- Action planning with directorate management teams regarding

employees subject to formal processes and link with manager development.

- Consider where diversity fits within our appraisal policies
- Review against the Race Equality Charter and Disability Equality Charter

### **3. Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce information**

- GCC continued to publish the gender pay gap report and workforce equality report to fulfil our statutory duty. Our gender pay gaps has significantly improved in recent years and should be celebrated.
- To support the quality and inclusivity of reports SAP was updated with a new question for staff around their “self-identified” gender. The purpose of this change was to ensure our reports are inclusive of the needs of staff with varying gender identities however, recent feedback has identified issues with the available options. In response to this feedback, we are currently in the process of reviewing alternative options for the future system.
- SAP equality data completion rates were promoted prior to the data collection for Workforce Equality Report and in the staff survey. This action will be carried forward and developed to continually improve completion rates which continue to be low. Alternatives are being explored for areas of the business that do not have direct access to the SAP system.

#### **Next Steps**

- Continued publication of the Gender Pay Gap and Workforce Equality Report. Analysis of pay in relation to other protected characteristics.
- Engaging with staff to improve the quality of voluntary completion of equalities data.
- Detailed analysis of the 2021 census information once it is published in order to inform how our workforce should reflect those communities. This will inform the development of targets for the internal make of our workforce to ensure that we reflect the wider community that we serve.
- Reviewing feedback of our 2021 Stonewall Index Submission and building actions into the plan.
- Analysis of reports from the new recruitment system to understand the outcomes of recruitment practice and to develop additional actions.

GCC will continue to publish the public reports on the workforce in line with our statutory duty. The continued improvement of the quality of this data will allow for more meaningful analysis. Increasing the completion rates and accuracy of the data will support more effective action planning. The full details of the Stonewall Index benchmarking will be available in May 2022 for review, this will support further analysis of any gaps we have across our services, including those sit outside of the workforce remit. Our continued improvement of GCC’s ranking in the Stonewall index will improve the outward reputation of organisation to support attracting more diverse applicants.

#### **4. Learning and development**

It is clear from feedback from colleagues via the networks and safe space events that our managers' skills in support those who are different from them and developing positive team cultures varies significantly. Training for staff around ED&I has been scoped and the current plan for ED&I and cultural competency training for staff is to start with managers. The intention is for managers to have the competency to embed the strategy in their business areas and act as role models. This management training has included:

- CLT development sessions
- Leadership conference – Inclusive Leadership
- The Managing Diverse Teams and Building Inclusive Services development programme pilots were completed and this training will be available to book from May 2022.

#### **Next Steps**

- Continued development of the workforce through positive action programmes including Stepping Up, Flourish and Reciprocal Mentoring
- Commissioned training for line and service managers including Managing Diverse Teams and Building Inclusive Organisations monitored in terms of completion rates and gaps.
- Continue to commission and share training for all staff including Skills Boosters and launching wider Unconscious Bias training
- The roll out of Allyship training and further commissioning of additional materials to support the allyship offer
- Commission training on reasonable adjustments, hidden disabilities and neurodiversity

The development of staff will continue as part of core training to ensure cultural competency of front-line workers and managers. This will lay the foundation for staff to support the implementation of future ED&I project within their services.

#### **5. Health and Wellbeing**

Our focus in the past year has been in supporting the organisation to cope with the impact of the Pandemic as well as furthering our Occupational Health offer to be centred around prevention and the promotion of a healthy workforce accessible to all. We have wanted to pay particular attention to some of the health inequalities that the Pandemic has highlighted in the wider society and ensuring the offer to our workforce is inclusive and takes account of difference. We have focused on upskilling our line managers to feel confident to have wellbeing conversations with staff particularly those who were isolated while working from home. Issues around mental health and anxiety were highlighted in the staff survey and the employee voice groups, and we are aware of cultural differences and issues relating to disability that sometimes prevent people accessing support.

This training and preventative work has included.

- Emotional support pages on staff net

- Weekly H and WB articles in Talk smart, targeted at underrepresented groups such as autism awareness as well as more general mental health awareness
- Drop in anxiety buster sessions online, around the time staff were returning to the office
- E:Learning for managers on 'holding wellbeing conversations remotely' with supporting materials
- Frontline Fatigue dynamic process workshops for teams who have worked with the public throughout the Pandemic

### **Next Steps**

- MIND E:Learning for all people managers throughout the organisation to have the tools and resources to support the mental wellbeing of staff
- Develop improved guidance for managers to manage workplace stress
- Increase access, monitoring and assessment of bullying and harassment procedures through a re design of the Dignity at Work network
- Health MOT's for staff
- Work with Directorates to establish Health and Wellbeing Champions
- Review and standardise our approach to Reasonable Adjustments
- HR H and WB dashboard to better gather data and assess how we are doing

We will continue to increase the reach and depth of our Health and Wellbeing offer by working more closely with Directorates and stakeholder groups to align with our ED and I strategy.

## **6. The role of CLT**

There has been conversation with the employee networks regarding the asks of CLT members generally and the network sponsors specifically. These are summarised below:

- To be a champion for the network at CLT and in the organisation (sponsors).
- Address any blockers or issues that may be faced by the networks (all)
- Raise awareness of initiatives, e.g. Race Equality week (all).
- Actively support initiatives run by the networks (all).
- Support the ED&I agenda and action plan (all).
- Act as a visible ally (all).
- Champions diversity within the council as well as at CLT (all).
- Someone who is on CLT and who we can ask to present papers on our behalf (sponsors).
- Making an effort to be available i.e. attending meetings every quarter, responding to emails.

## **7. Conclusion**

	<p>The actions and recommendations highlighted in this paper build upon the work that was carried out in the first year of the Workforce Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to continue the momentum for positive cultural change. Equality, diversity and inclusion is becoming a key requirement for organisations to ensure employees supported in the workplace. Our workforce ED&amp;I strategy will support further developments of ED&amp;I in the council as the work around the wider LGA framework develops.</p>
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