

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020,
Gartree Room, County Hall, at 10:30am**

Equalities Board members / representatives	
Gordon McFarlane	Assistant Director, Corporate Resources (Chair)
Ian Vears	Assistant Director, Environment & Transport
Christine Collingwood	Commissioning Business Manager, Adults & Communities
Mo Seedat	Head of Democratic Services, Chief Exec's
Mike McHugh	Medical Consultant, Public Health
Fiona Walker	Co-Chair of LGBT+ Staff Network
Leon Charikar	BAME Network
Presenting / supporting officers	
Mark Foote	HR/OD Business Partner, Corporate Resources
Zafar Saleem	Head of Communities, Policy & Resilience, Chief Exec's
Donna Worship	Policy Manager, Chief Exec's
Andrew Jeffreys	Policy Officer (Equalities), Chief Exec's
Also attending	
Mandy Baughurst	Learning & Development Advisor, Corporate Resources
Ashley Epps	Policy Officer, Chief Exec's
Apologies	
Kate Revell, Paula Sumner, Anthony Stone, Rabinder Lail	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action by
1	Welcome – present and apologies (GMcF) See above.	
2	Minutes of Equalities Board held on Monday 16th December 2019 i. Accuracy – the Minutes were accepted as correct. ii. Matters arising – none.	

<p>3</p>	<p>Final Equality Strategy 2020-24 and Corporate Equality Action Plan 2020-21 (AJ / DW)</p> <p>Public consultation on the draft Equality Strategy 2020-24 took place between 11th November 2019 and 2nd February 2020 through the ‘Have your say’ pages on the Council’s website. Standard and easy read versions of the strategy and questionnaire were made available as well as a British Sign Language video. 213 responses were received to the consultation of which 67% were as a Council employee, 23% as a member of the public and 9% as a VCS or community representative, supplier of services to the council of councillor.</p> <p>The consultation was informed ahead and throughout by targeted face-to-face with stakeholder and representative groups from protected and vulnerable characteristics or backgrounds, as well as with communities of practice and relevant services, staff and management groups within the Council. Issues and risks explored through the external engagement included the tightening of eligibility criteria for services, digital exclusion, how to tackle barriers of stigmatisation and stereotypes, and how to improve accessible information about as well as ways of accessing Council services. Various suggestions were made including promoting positive stories around diversity and inclusion, designing more services with users and/or empowering them to self-support, and other partnership working.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of the draft Strategy were broadly supported by most respondents with commentary around the practical effects of the strategy, how it would be implemented and monitored, and proposed specific actions that could be included, for example, promoting awareness of breastfeeding services, assistance dogs, mental health issues and support to rural communities. The strategy aims and two of the five equality objectives have been amended accordingly. The accompanying Equality Action Plan 2020-21 covers key issues around improving the range and use of equalities evidence, improving career progression for BAME staff, reviewing Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIA) to better capture cumulative impacts, making information more accessible both for protected characteristic groups and more widely, and strengthening leadership and success on equalities issues.</p> <p>The Equality Action Planning workshop on 17th January resulted in a good attendance across departments and key services. Attendees were asked to populate a matrix assessment of suggested actions against impact (high or low) and implementation (easy or difficult). The matrix will be used to identify priority areas for future action plans.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed by Board and suggested that consideration should be given to producing an end of strategy report in 2024</p>	
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	<p>Action: Schedule future Board session on delivery of the Equality Action Plan 2020-21</p>	AJ
4	<p>MTFS EHRIA and Cumulative Impacts (DW)</p> <p>Experience from completion of the EHRIA on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-24 has suggested that this should become an annual process. The exercise was intended to give a high-level overview of the most significant equalities risks from spending decisions and that the “due regard” requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty should be a key consideration in the implementation of service reviews driven by MTFS. The matrix used to inform the assessment includes information on the numbers and type of people most likely to be affected by changes against the relevant protected characteristics and Human Rights articles. It also highlighted the positive financial benefits likely to flow from investment and economic growth activity. It was commented that Business Partners should have a key role in helping to establishing a cumulative view and initiatives that could be taken across the Council.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed by Board to recommend annual equalities impact assessment to the Corporate Management Team</p>	
5	<p>Disability Confident Accreditation Update (MF)</p> <p>The Council has been awarded a self-assessed Disability Confident Level 2 – Employer status since 6th July 2018 with an accreditation expiry date of 3rd July 2020 but which has now been extended to 3rd July 2021. 19 local authorities, including Derby City Council and Melton Borough Council locally, have Level 3 – Leader status.</p> <p>For the Council to attain Level 3 requires an independent validation of its self-assessment and evidencing of employment of disabled people. Three areas need to be met: Challenge which involves documenting the engagement carried out with disabled and EDI stakeholders (staff, service users, local or national groups or networks) during the self-assessment; Leadership to describe the activities to encourage other organisations to become Disability Confident including through social media, networking, mentoring, sponsorship, events and using procurement and contracting to drive positive change; and Reporting on disability, mental health and wellbeing using a voluntary reporting framework. The reporting narrative is not prescribed but is likely to cover organisational policies, support offered for specific disabilities and conditions, training, and indicators of self-declaration and satisfaction.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed by Board to work towards meeting Level 3 accreditation.</p>	

6	<p>Gender Pay Gap 2019 Report (MF)</p> <p>The statutory Gender Pay Gap (GPG) reporting for 2019 shows initial results to the ‘snapshot date’ for public sector organisations of 31st March in comparison against previous reporting periods for 2017 when GPG was introduced and 2018. The Council reports against the indicators of Mean Gender Pay Gap, Median Gender Pay Gap and Proportion of Males and Females in each Pay Quartile. Additional indicators in respect of mean, median and differential bonus payments are not applicable.</p> <p>Mean Gender Pay Gap – females mean hourly rate lower than males March 2017: 18% March 2018: 12% March 2019: 12%</p> <p>Median Gender Pay Gap – females mean hourly rate lower than males March 2017: 20% March 2018: 9% March 2019: 7%</p> <p>Pay quartile data suggests that although there has been a slight increase in females in the lower pay quarter, this has been offset by a decrease in females in the lower middle quartile and an increase in females in the upper middle quartile. This upward effect can be attributed to how the Council supports women in its workforce including the successful Springboard and Spring Forward management programmes as well as specific support around menopause, celebrating female role models and International Women’s Day. As a result, between March 2017 and 2019, the number of women in the lower pay grades 6-8 has decreased by 7% and increased in pay grades 8-10 by 5%.</p> <p>Decision: Noted by Board</p>	
7	<p>Hate Incident Monitoring Strategy and Feedback (AC)</p> <p>Due to time constraints, this report was held over for Board members to make comments directly to Anita Chavda outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Action: As above.</p>	All
8	<p>Policy Officer (Equalities) Update (AJ)</p> <p>BAME progression research</p> <p>The work to understand the Council’s performance in progression by BAME members of staff against the initiatives currently in place has been awarded to The Staff College, an organisation that supports development of leadership and management capacity in local authorities, particularly in children’s services. This will involve identifying BAME staff experience of working for LCC and potential and actual barriers through key personnel interviews, focus group work and a comparison of LCC processes with</p>	

other organisations. A full report and recommendations will be provided to the Equalities Board at its next meeting

Better Care Together partnership working

The reverse mentoring cohort in Adults & Communities department has commenced following the provision of training for mentee managers. A further training date is being organised for Children & Family Service mentees who were unable to attend due to an OFSTED inspection taking priority. The EDI conference event planned for 31st March has been postponed due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

The Cabinet agreed to adopt the IHRA Definition at its meeting on 7th February. A record of the decision is on the Council’s website – see item 5 – and includes a link to the report recommending its adoption.

LGBT+ Inclusion

The Council was successful in receiving awards for the Best Regional LGBT+ Staff Network (joint with Nottinghamshire County Council) at the Stonewall East Midlands Awards on 7th February and also as one of the pilot organisations in the LGBT+ Inclusion Award. The aim for 2021 is to extend the scheme to other local organisations / sectors and communities.

Dementia Friendly Council

A Task & Finish Group has been set up to progress this work including the development of a Dementia Friendly Plan to map across existing knowledge and provision across relevant services / teams. The TFG will report to the Adults & Communities DMT as a first stage in securing support for this work.

Trans Service Users Policy

Adults & Communities and the Policy Officer have initiated conversations with Trans community members on developing a ‘best practice’ policy to improve Trans and non-binary users of Adult Social Care services. A workshop is being planned to engage the community and stakeholders.

Accessibility Audit

A presentation had been prepared for discussion with Property Services and developing an action plan to respond to areas of concern (mostly signage and disabled parking).

Decision: Noted by Board

9	<p>Update from Workers' Groups</p> <p>Black Workers' Group – the group has voted to rename itself as the BAME Network and a launch event is planned for Tuesday, 16th June. Meetings are becoming better attended and appropriate support provided to group members on a range of issues.</p> <p>LGBT+ Staff Network – The role models refresh and promotion has been successful with a diverse range of over 30 nominations from a broader audience and wider service sector. There will be a meeting with partners to shortlist and finalise the new resource.</p>	
10	<p>Any other business</p> <p>IV said that Environment & Transport department was following up on the Staff Survey 2019 results to understand why some groups are not feeling more satisfied/happier. Information gathering is taking place with the support of HR and Learning & Development to identify actions and any useful information will be brought back to the Board.</p> <p>MM advised that a priority for the LLR Safeguarding Board will be Hate Crime reporting for wider public and staff.</p>	
	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Monday 15th June 2020 at 10:30am in Gartree Committee Room</p>	
	<p>Minutes to: Equalities Board, John Sinnott, Cllr. Louise Richardson</p>	