

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	26 June 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update Report
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/23/163
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald, Director - Customer
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People & OD and Customer Experience
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Darren Buck
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.5

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update on our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) following the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Progress Report Update](#) of 13 March 2023.
- 1.2 To provide assurance that work is progressing to meet our Equality Outcomes and is continuously adapted and improved.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the progress made as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan;
- 2.2 Approves the approach to further reviewing the data from the aforementioned Progress Report and placing a focus of equality, diversity and inclusion work on the areas outlined in section 4.3.3 of this report;
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report;
- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee in advance of the next Mainstreaming Report being presented to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (dates to be confirmed) with an update on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes. This will include the annual update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan; and

2.5 Instructs the Chief Officer – People and Organisation Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on any future changes of approach towards the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan or any additional equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and actions that require elected member approval.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **3.1 Equality Outcomes**

3.1.1 The Council has two Equality Outcomes as an employer in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010). The latest outcomes were approved at the former [Operational Delivery Committee in March 2021](#) and are for the period 2021-2025.

3.1.2 These outcomes are:

- Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex.
- Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Sex and Sexual orientation.

#### **3.2 Development and Design of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan**

3.2.1 To support the delivery of our employer equality outcomes, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan was developed and approved at [Staff Governance Committee in April 2021](#). This Action Plan was co-created following engagement with our workforce, Equality Ambassadors Network and partner organisations. This Action Plan also supports the organisation's various accreditations and pledges such as Investors in Young People, Disability Confident and Equally Safe at Work.

3.2.2 While proposing some [suggested actions](#), the Action Plan sought to establish employee working groups for the purposes of ongoing listening and development. This was to ensure any actions taken forward were meaningful and co-created by our diverse employees.

3.2.3 In 2021, we established five working groups, in addition to maintaining our existing Equality Ambassadors Network: Age Working Group Disability Working Group LGBT+ Working Group Race Working Group (known as 'RED' – Race Equality and Diversity) and Working Group for Sex as a Protected Characteristic

3.2.4 Each of these working groups are made up of employees who either have a protected characteristic, are an ally or are interested in Equality, Diversity and

Inclusion. Membership of these groups is flexible, with employees giving their time as and when they are able.

3.2.5 Each group is facilitated by at least one People and Organisational Development Advisor who all form part of an oversight working group which ensures that all of the work is coordinated, joined up and takes into consideration intersectionality.

3.2.6 In line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan report, People and Organisational Development, along with the staff working groups, are following the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle ensuring that active and ongoing listening takes place and that the impact on actions is considered.

### **3.3 New Pledges and Accreditations**

3.3.1 Since the previous Staff Governance Report in April 2021, the Council has agreed to sign up to two pledges, both approved at Staff Governance Committee in November 2022:

- [Pregnancy Loss Pledge](#)
- [Menopause Workplace Pledge](#)

3.3.2 These pledges provide further focus and frameworks for the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work. Further information about these pledges was presented to Staff Governance Committee in the papers hyperlinked in 3.3.1.

### **3.4 New Capability Framework and Development Framework**

3.4.1 The Council's new [Capability and Development Framework](#) was approved at Staff Governance Committee in January 2023.

3.4.2 The new Capability Framework introduced the Core Capability Theme of 'Care' which places stronger emphasis on visibility of equality, diversity and inclusion and respecting others in the workplace.

3.4.3 Indicators for each of the Core Capability Themes are currently being finalised in line with the Council's Job Family approach. Indicators relating to equality, diversity and inclusion will be in place for each Job Family.

3.4.4 In addition, a Development Framework sits under each Job Family and will relate directly to the Capability Framework. This will include Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training that is meaningful and relevant for each Job Family.

## **4 Actions 2021-2023**

### **4.1 Actions Included in Previous Report**

4.1.1 Work that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working groups have completed to date was included in [Appendix 1](#) of the latest Staff Governance Report found [here](#).

## 4.2 Actions Completed Since Latest Report

4.2.1 Since the last Staff Governance Report on 13 March 2023, there have been further actions undertaken:

- A Disabled Worker Event was held at the Beach Ballroom for managers and employers in the city in recognition of Year of the Disabled Worker 2022 (event was postponed and rescheduled to March 2023 due to adverse weather)
- Various staff Intranet posts for awareness-raising purposes have been issued on topics such as Neurodiversity Celebration Week, World Cancer Day, Time to Talk Day, Down Syndrome Awareness, Multiple Sclerosis, Deaf Awareness, Spinal Cord Injuries, Mental Health Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Visibility.
- A partnership working group created between Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and Police Scotland to join up and collaborate on equality, diversity and inclusion work with regular meetings and a Microsoft Teams site.
- Further improvements to the Council's Recruitment & Selection Training have been made to update the race and religion sections of the training.
- An internal campaign for International Women's Day was launched which highlighted events taking place in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and utilised newly created e-learning and infographics. The campaign included an intranet post with interviews with women across Aberdeen City Council.
- Participated as an organisation in Grampian Pride 2023.

## 4.3 Current Data Position

4.3.1 The data presented to Staff Governance Committee in March as part of the progress report update included all of our statutory employee diversity data. This data highlighted a few areas that require further attention as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

4.3.2 These areas were:

- **Disability** - While we have increased the number of disabled people employed by the Council since 2020, the proportion of the workforce declaring themselves to have a disability has decreased very minimally. The number of those who choose not to disclose their disability has also increased minimally. The proportion of leavers who are disabled has, however, decreased since 2021 from 4.71% to 3.70%.

At the same time, we have seen a very slight decrease since 2020 of job applications for Education roles from those who have a disability, as well as a very slight increase in those not disclosing anything related to disability at application stage. This is therefore worth exploring further.

- **Race** - Since 2020, we have seen a very slight increase in number of employees from the minority ethnic groups (excluding white minorities) from 2.57% of the workforce to 3.34% of the workforce. Headcount across these different groups has also increased, showing an upwards trend. The successful

recruitment of people from these groups is, according to the previous progress report, sitting at 9.53% of all recruits which supports the upward trend. To further support this, we have seen an increase in applications from people from these groups with candidates from these groups making up 19.9% of applicants in 2022. Data from 2021 shows that this was previously 13.94%. However, it is also worth noting that the proportion of leavers who are people from these groups has fluctuated over several years as seen below:

Year	% Leavers from minority ethnic groups (excluding white minorities)
2017	2.18%
2018	2.89%
2019	2.11%
2020	1.68%
2021	3.07%
2022	3.64%

Whilst the 2022 figure is reflective of the workforce profile, this may be worth exploring further to ensure that we are retaining ethnically diverse employees at the same time as recruiting them.

4.3.3 To summarise the above, a priority and focus of equality, diversity and inclusion work therefore needs to be:

- An exploration into why we are seeing a reduction in the number of staff disclosing disabilities and how we might encourage more employees to self-disclose this (and otherwise complete their diversity information);
- An exploration into why we are seeing a reduced number of applications from disabled candidates within Education and if there are any further actions and improvements to demonstrate that the Cluster is a disability-friendly, equal and inclusive employer; and
- An exploration into the fluctuation in the % of leavers of which are employees from minority ethnic groups, with further exploration into all the different ethnicity groups and their data trends, and if there are any explanations for this that require action and improvement.

4.3.4 Since the previous report was presented to Staff Governance Committee in March, the staff working groups have been made aware of the data above and are exploring these areas further with People and Organisational Development and identifying actions which can be co-created and taken forward over the next two years.

#### 4.4 Data Changes and Improvements

4.4.1 In line with the [Scottish Government Guidance](#) on collecting, analysing and publishing diversity data, we have made changes to our HR & Payroll system, CoreHR, which aligns with this guidance.

- 4.4.2 These changes also bring CoreHR more closely in line with changes to diversity data collection on TalentLink, the external system used by the Council for recruitment and selection management.
- 4.4.3 To allow for these changes, previous diversity data has been archived and new questions and options made available to all employees.
- 4.4.4 A communications and engagement campaign has been launched to encourage employees to complete their diversity data on CoreHR.
- 4.4.5 Having these changes will ensure that the Council is collecting and analysing data in a best-practice way and also ensures that all of our data collection is consistent across our employment systems.
- 4.4.6 Having these changes will also align the Council with Scottish census data due to be published. This will make analysing and comparing data sets easier and more effective and accurate.

#### **4.5 Additional Survey**

- 4.5.1 In line with the staff communications and engagement around updating diversity data, we have added a staff survey to gather further thoughts from employees on work undertaken to date and where further improvements can be made.
- 4.5.2 This survey will allow us to measure the qualitative impact of equality, diversity and inclusion activity and how employees are feeling about where we are on our journey.

#### **4.6 Actions in Progress**

- 4.6.1 There are a number of actions currently in progress that will support with meeting our equality outcomes:

<b>Action in Progress</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Current Timescale</b>
Accelerator Programme	A leadership and management development programme for under-represented groups at leadership and management level in the organisation.	Engagement with staff working groups completed. Survey for staff working groups and Equality Ambassadors Network completed and returned. Content available and adjustments being identified. Aiming for initial cohort launch in Summer 2023.
Diversity Pack for Recruitment	A booklet to be attached to recruitment adverts and available on our external website for candidates to get information about	Draft completed. Draft sent to staff working groups and Equality Ambassadors Network and feedback received.

	equality, diversity and inclusion at the Council as well as more information about positive action.	Draft sent to Design & Graphics teams for creation. Aiming for inclusion in adverts from Summer 2023 onwards.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Update	An update to refresh of our existing Diversity and Equality Policy.	Due at Staff Governance Committee in early 2024.
Family Friendly Policies Review	A review of family friendly policies such as maternity, paternity, adoption and IVF to ensure that they are inclusive in language and provision. Also to be reviewed in line with the <a href="#">Working in Partnership Policy Statement</a> .	Working group established. Scope of policy review identified. Benchmarking and initial review underway. Update due to Staff Governance Committee 4 September 2023 and full policies due in Summer 2024.
Review and Refresh of the Council's Multi-Faith Room	There is a multi-faith room in the Town House. An options appraisal is required to determine future use of this room.	RED are currently discussing this with Facilities colleagues.

## 4.7 Next Steps

- 4.7.1 The Council's Mainstreaming Report is due to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (2025 meeting dates to be confirmed). This will include refreshed Equality Outcomes. The Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development will return to Staff Governance Committee prior to this date to provide information and to seek approval on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes.
- 4.7.2 The update to Staff Governance Committee referred to at 4.7.1 shall include an update on progress related to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.
- 4.7.3 Any changes to approach or any additional initiatives and actions that require elected member approval will be brought to Staff Governance Committee accordingly.
- 4.7.4 An annual update to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan will be provided to Staff Governance Committee either as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an individual update report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report. This next update will be due in March 2024 (2024 meeting dates to be confirmed).

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Ongoing work on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan will ensure the Council maintains compliance with its duties under the Equality Act (2010).

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 8. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Inability to deliver on LOIP, TOM 1.2 or Workforce Strategy given importance of equality, diversity and inclusion to these.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan - Actions undertaken, including awareness raising, reviews of policies, procedures and guidance, as well as a review of training and development.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Requirement to meet the General Duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty and produce statutory reports. Ensuring that Aberdeen City Council complies with the Equality Act (2010) and does not discriminate.	The update provides assurances of meeting our public sector duties. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan - Actions undertaken, including awareness raising, reviews of policies, procedures and guidance, as well as a review of training and development.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	No significant risks identified			

<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	Risks of treating staff unfairly or discriminating and not providing an inclusive environment could impact on Council reputation and employer brand.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan - Actions undertaken, including awareness raising, reviews of policies, procedures and guidance, as well as a review of training and development.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			

## 9. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><b><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></b></p>	<p>By working towards equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer, we are working towards diversifying our workforce which in turn, supports the delivery of services for our diverse communities.</p> <p>Equality, diversity and inclusion is an important part of the Council's workforce delivery plan which aims to meet the Council's Target Operating Model 1.2 and ultimately its strategic goals. Specifically, within the policy statement, this report impacts positively on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, with the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Statement, this report supports with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the number of apprenticeships on offer through the council</li> <li>• Work to ensure that every school community provides a safe and respectful environment for young people and staff</li> <li>• Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff</li> <li>• Double paternity leave for Aberdeen City Council staff and encourage other employers in the city to do likewise.</li> </ul>
<b><u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></u></b>	

Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	This report supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026</li> <li>• 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026.</li> </ul>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	This report supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As corporate parents we will ensure 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</li> <li>• 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</li> <li>• Child friendly city where all decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026.</li> </ul>

## 10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Not required for this report as Integrated Impact Assessment completed for the Mainstreaming Report previously.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, Staff Governance Committee, 12 April 2021, RES/21/077](#)
- 11.2 [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Progress Report Update, Staff Governance Committee, 13 March 2023, CUS/23/079](#)
- 11.3 [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, Operational Delivery Committee, 11 March 2021, CUS/21/051](#)
- 11.4 [Pregnancy Loss Support, Staff Governance Committee, 21 November 2022, CUS/22/264](#)
- 11.5 [Menopause Awareness and Support, Staff Governance Committee, 21 November 2022, CUS/22/263](#)
- 11.6 [Job Families and Capability Framework, Staff Governance Committee, 20 January 2023, CUS/23/036](#)

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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