

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	15 July 2025
Report of:	Director of Housing and Communities
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equalities and Inclusion and Executive Member Housing, Planning and Safer Communities

Decision Report: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Subject of Report

1. In April 2024 a report to Executive presented the results of an externally facilitated assessment against the recently refreshed Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
2. This work fed into a Draft Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. At the Executive meeting of April 2024 Members approved a recommendation to consult on the draft strategy which would inform a final document for adoption, with a linked action plan. Public consultation ran from January to March 2025 and the data is available here <https://data.yorkopendata.org/dataset/cyc-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-consultation-2025>
3. This report asks for Executive approval for both the final strategy and annual action plan.

Benefits and Challenges

4. This work sits alongside other recent areas of development and action including re-establishment of the Human Rights & Equalities Board, the council's adoption of the Social Model of Disability and its Anti-Racism Action Plan and Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan.

5. It builds on the city's designation and partnership working with regard to City of Sanctuary, Human Rights City and pledge to be an Anti-Racist City and recognised growing cross partnership strengths in these areas.
6. Recognising the journey the council has begun, reflecting both the feedback from respondents to the survey and wider environmental context within the city where hate crimes are rising and community groups still report concerning challenges, the strategy sets out the council will work toward 'excellent' against the EFLG through an annually updated action plan. This will ensure progress is supported and championed across the council, and the impact positively recognised by community groups, rather than the focus being to complete a check list of actions to achieve a grade.

Policy Basis for Decision

7. The Council Plan 'One City, For All 2023-2027' states: Equalities and Human Rights - Equality of opportunity 'We will create opportunities for all, providing equal opportunity and balancing the human rights of everyone to ensure residents and visitors alike can benefit from the city and its strengths. We will stand up to hate and work hard to champion our communities'.
8. The impact of this work will affect every element of the Council Plan and associated policies.
9. This work will contribute to the council's core commitments around:
 - a) Equalities & Human Rights – this report is fully focused on meeting this core commitment.
 - b) Affordability – inequity and exclusion can impact on access to jobs, skills development and economic opportunity and so any improvements made will have direct benefits of the financial and economic wellbeing of the community.
 - c) Climate & Environment– there are no likely direct impacts on the Environment of this report although celebration of diverse cultures will bring a positive contribution to our community places and spaces.
 - d) Health – there are known health disparities for people from all groups with protected characteristics, both nationally and as seen

in data on the health of people in York, and any improvement in opportunity impacting on health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on communities.

Financial Strategy Implications

10. The costs relating to this report will be contained within existing budgets. Some elements of workforce monitoring may be limited or otherwise by the nature and capability of systems in use and data available which require further investment as part of ICT development plans.
11. Resources have been recruited into the Housing and Communities Directorate to support EDI and Human Rights work corporately, utilising the £50k growth built into the 2024/25 budget strategy.
12. There was a further £50k budget growth in 2025/26 for Disability Equity Training for Officers and Members to meet the commitment made to implementing the Social Model of Disability.
13. The work across all directorates could be considerable in terms of meeting statutory equalities and human rights responsibilities, including the need for additional training resources to support the delivery of these responsibilities.
14. Considering the council's current financial challenge, funding any further growth in this area of work will require compensatory savings to be identified elsewhere across the Council.

Recommendation and Reasons

15. That Executive approve the following:
 - a. the final Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and associated Annual Action Plan (the 'key deliverables' for Year 1 of the Strategy)
 - b. A progress report being produced every 12 months for the annual public meeting of the Human Rights and Equalities Board.

Reason: To demonstrate City of York Council's core commitment to becoming a more equal, diverse and inclusive council.

Background

16. Last year an assessment against the requirements of the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) was undertaken by an external consultant and at the Executive meeting in April 2024 the council adopted a draft strategy, pending the outcome of consultation. The strategy is a key part of the council's plan to make significant progress against the EFLG improving achievement against all elements of the framework:
 - Understanding and working with your communities
 - Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
 - Responsive services and customer care
 - Developing a diverse and engaged workforce
17. This work sits alongside other recent areas of development and action including re-establishment of the Human Rights and Equalities Board (HREB), the Council's adoption of, and work in progress to deliver the Social Model of Disability, the Anti-Racism Strategy and the Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan. It builds on the city's designation and partnership working with regard to City of Sanctuary, York Human Rights City and the pledge to be an Anti-Racist City and recognised growing cross partnership strengths in these areas.
18. In addition to further growth funding for training, within the Council examples of other areas of corporate improvement include:
 - Recruitment to the role of Head of EDI;
 - Production of ethnicity pay gap data to start to understand where inequity lies within our workforce for staff from a pay and progression perspective alongside qualitative data from staff groups and surveys;
 - Development of Human Rights & Equality Analysis templates for decision-making;
 - Training on addressing microaggressions;
 - Training and policy on new duty to prevent sexual harassment;
 - Establishment and training of Domestic Abuse Champions;
 - Recognition of people with care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

- Adoption of the Poverty Truth Commission's Charter for Organisation Standards.
19. Following approval from Executive, council officers carried out a public consultation on the draft Strategy as outlined above. This had a qualitative and quantitative focus with a survey (on and offline) receiving around 500 responses. In addition, five focus groups and one public meeting were held with the following groups with protected characteristics:
 - People with learning difficulties;
 - Older people;
 - Young adults;
 - Neurodiverse people; and
 - Members of the LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, + holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities) community.
 20. Officers also held a public meeting and engaged with residents on social media.
 21. The responses captured in the public consultation gave a helpful insight into how the council can build on skills in the workforce to develop capacity to support and embed a whole organisation shift in equity, inclusion and diversity.
 22. Officers are also taking forward some proposals put forward during the consultation for quickly implementable improvements e.g. small changes to the website.

Consultation Analysis

Results of the consultation –

23. Below are the headlines from the public consultation and the changes made to the EDI Strategy as a result:
 - 1 in 5 have experienced or witnessed intolerance or discrimination from CYC
 - Respondents want a clear and actionable commitment on EDI from the Council (only 55% agree the commitment in the Strategy is clear)
 - 1 in 4 disagree that Council's services are accessible to all it's communities

- Objectives 1 and 4 were seen as most important
- Only 35% believe the Council provides opportunities for community groups to influence decision-making
- The public wants concrete action, leadership to drive the strategy forward and continuous engagement with protected groups.

24. As a result of the above feedback from the public, the following changes have been made to the EDI Strategy:

- Made it simple –the objectives have been consolidated with the aims and commitments, providing a succinct vision with clear ‘business case’;
- Concrete action –the Key Deliverables will be published ahead of each year to show the measurable outputs from taking action. Year 1 Key Deliverables are in the table below;
- Continuous engagement – an annual report will be published on progress as part of public HREB meeting, and progress will be shared in a way that is accessible to all groups;
- Driven by leadership – so that Members and officers are seen to address EDI in service plans, we require that service plans have at least one EDI objective

Annual Action Plan

Key deliverables by end of June 2026	Owner
EDI Strategy and annual report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared across CYC, Partners and EDI bodies. • Annual progress report published for HREB public meeting. 	Human Rights and Equalities Board Chairs
Human Rights & Equalities Champions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Head of Service nominates Champion. • Champions receive HREA Tool training and are responsible for ensuring completion of assessments. 	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team
Launch Human Rights & Equity Analysis tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the tool will be mandatory for the Leading Together group, completion of the training will form part of PDRs in order to track attendance. • Completed impact assessment will be required for forward plans. 	Assistant Director for Customer, Communities & Inclusion

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all service areas that publish reports, must publish at least one completed assessment by June 2026. • At least one EDI objective needs to be incorporated into service plans. 	
Disability equity training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual roll out as part of design. • Participants indicate increased confidence in supporting disabled people. • Training delivered to Members, Senior Officers and target groups at CYC. 	EDI Team and Human Resources
All areas have EDI data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and citizens respond positively on a question added 'I was treated with dignity & respect'. • Show how we are using data to inform service design, development and improvement, by having at least one EDI objective in each service plan by June 2026. 	Business intelligence
Recruitment impact analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assessment working with staff networks and agree actions 	HR
Progression impact analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mechanism to report on progression within the organisation • Complete an assessment of available data, including both quantitative and qualitative data. Collaborate with staff networks and agree actions 	HR
EDI training with anti-racism focus to be built into staff training plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a mapping exercise of existing EDI-related training and expertise, including service specific training. • Where possible replicate existing training and develop new training across managers and staff, ensure this addresses anti-racism, cultural awareness and issues facing Gypsy & Traveller communities. • Success will be measured by participants indicating increased confidence and understanding with regards to anti-racism. 	EDI Team, HR and Directors

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

25. There is no other recommendation but to accept the recommendations at paragraph 15. As the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council to publish its equality objectives every four years, if Executive chose not to sign off this strategy these at least should be published.

These would give a line of sight for all the council's work which needs to have EDI and Human Rights considerations and implications embedded into its values, processes plans and decision-making mechanisms.

As noted in paragraphs 27 and 28 there is significant risk to the council were we not to adopt the actions proposed.

Organisational Impact and Implications

26.

Financial

- The financial implications are described in paragraphs 10-14 above and outline that, in light of the council's continued financial challenges, any additional costs will be managed by reprioritising existing budgets. Whilst the staffing costs incurred in doing this work will remain within existing budgets, further resources may be needed for training purposes across all equalities responsibilities.
- Considering the council's continued financial challenges, any additional costs will need to be managed by making compensatory budget cuts elsewhere within the Council or through reprioritising existing budgets.

Human Resources

- An additional post has been created to lead EDI in the council taking forward the operational actions in the action plan. Human Rights and equalities training / awareness will be undertaken to embed actions into all aspects of everyday working at the council. HR will work alongside the Head of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to review the outcome of the risk assessments and resulting policy/process implications referred to in the report and annexes.

Legal

- The Council needs to take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions).
- Under the Human Rights Act 1998 it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with the rights set out in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, agreed by the Council of Europe at Rome on 4th November 1950 ("the Convention"). In particular, the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention must be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.
- The report gives an update on how the council is seeking to meet its obligations under Equalities and Human Rights Acts with regard to all people protected under those Acts.

Procurement

- There are no direct procurement impacts contained in this report. However, protected characteristics under the Equalities Act can be focused on when considering social value in procurement.

Health and Wellbeing

- Health implications are covered in paragraph 9 above as one of the council's core commitments. Public Health and the Director of Public Health support the intentions within this report. Overall, promoting equality contributes to the creation of healthier, more resilient communities where individuals can thrive and enjoy a higher quality of life.

Environment and Climate

- The design and implementation of services to achieve our climate change ambition will follow the principles of the EDI Strategy. The negative impacts of climate change are most likely to be experienced by disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; EDI is

therefore essential in ensuring a just transition towards net zero and that appropriate adaptation measures are delivered to support these groups.

Affordability

- Inequity and exclusion can impact on access to jobs, skills development and economic opportunity and so any improvements made as a result of this report will have direct benefits of the financial and economic wellbeing of the community.

Equalities and Human Rights

- There will be a need to ensure resources are dedicated to all equalities work across all protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. A full EIA is included at Annex C.

Data Protection and Privacy

- Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK data protection and privacy legislation. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines.
- DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all of our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve.
- The completion of data protection impact assessment (DPIA) screening questions evidenced there would be no processing of personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data processed, so there is no requirement to complete a DPIA

Communications

- Building on work already done in internal communications around the Council Plan's Equalities commitment, and in the ongoing annual communications plan, visible and consistent communications approaches will be required to support and demonstrate the City of York Council's core commitment to becoming a more equal, diverse and inclusive council.

Economy

- As with the affordability implications, the report will have a positive impact on access to jobs, skills development and economic

opportunity if equitable and inclusive policies are embedded and diversity is baked into the council's culture.

Risks and Mitigations

27. Should the actions in this report not be delivered, the council will fail to make progress and to be taken seriously with regards to any and all aspects of equity and inclusion. As such the council will remain unrepresentative of its communities and will not be seen as a fair and inclusive employer. It will also fail to achieve in its ambition to be Excellent against the EFLG. Management of resources, capacity and close monitoring of action plans will need to be in place to mitigate these risks.
28. Impacts for the city as a whole could be significant, impacting on the city's reputation as a welcoming and safe city in which to live, work, visit and do business. The actions in this report will seek to support the hard work of partners and council teams in relation to city wide work.

Wards Impacted

All

Contact details

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Background papers

- ‘*Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan – Annual Update*’, Decision Session – Combined Executive Member Decision Session, 3 June 2025, [Agenda for Decision Session - Combined Executive Member Decision Session on Tuesday, 3 June 2025, 10.00 am](#) (Item 5)
- ‘*Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*’, Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee, 12 May 2025, [Agenda for Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on Monday, 12 May 2025, 5.30 pm](#) (Item 72)
- ‘*Adoption and implementation of the York Poverty Truth Commission’s Charter for Organisation Standards*’, Executive, 11 March 2025, [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 11 March 2025, 4.30 pm](#) (Item 88)
- [Equality Framework for Local Government | Local Government Association](#)
- ‘*Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan*’, Executive, 9 May 2024, <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=14497&Ver=4> (Item 128)
- ‘*Consultation on an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27 and Next Steps*’, Executive, 18 April 2024, <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=13938> (Item 117)

- *'Implementing the Social Model of Disability'*, Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights and Equalities, 24 January 2024, <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1060&MId=14294&Ver=4> (Item 13)
- *'Refreshed Governance Arrangements for York's Human Rights and Equalities Board'*, Executive, 14 December 2023, [Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 14 December 2023, 5.30 pm](#) (Item 68)
- *'Anti Racism and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan'*, Executive, 13 July 2024, [Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 13 July 2023, 5.30 pm](#) (Item 18)
- *'Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic'*, Executive, 14 November 2024, <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=14502#AI69235> (Item 54)

Abbreviations

EDI – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EFLG – Equalities Framework for Local Government

HREB – Human Rights and Equalities Board

LGA – Local Government Association

LGBTQIA+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, + holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities.

Annexes

- Annex A – Final Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Annex B – Equalities Impact Assessment