

 <p>CITY OF <b>YORK</b> COUNCIL</p>	
<p>Decision Session - Cabinet Leader, Finance &amp; Performance</p>	<p>19 March 2015</p>
<p>Report of the Assistant Director, Customers &amp; Employees</p>	

## **Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme**

### **Summary**

1. The purpose of the report is to gain approval for City of York Council (CYC) to become a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme to continue work on creating an environment where all employees are able to reach their full potential.

### **Background**

#### **The Council's commitment to date**

#### ***The Council's Workforce Strategy***

2. The current Strategy (2012-15) states that its key aim is to have a diverse, open and inclusive organisational culture, and as such priorities have been focussed on women in leadership and ongoing gaps in the workforce around employment of disabled and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.
3. It is clear from recent conversations with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community members, however, that the council could be more visibly welcoming and committed as an employer to LGBT communities. Anyone who also has a disabled and/or BME background will need to feel that the council can positively and openly remove multiple barriers to employment that may be perceived to currently exist.

4. This is viewed as visibly different to the commitment of other large employers in the city across all sectors (for example, Aviva and Joseph Rowntree Foundation). As such it is likely to emerge as one of the priorities for the council's new developing Workforce Strategy from 2015 onwards.

### ***Other Activity***

5. Officers and councillors, including the Diversity Champion, have sought to be involved in awareness raising around LGBT issues in the city and within the council. CYC has increased its involvement in the LGBT Forum and has supported the York Pride event since its creation in 2012 and this featured in the recent Equalities for Local Government (EFLG) peer assessment.
6. The council also has a Staff Equality Experts group (SEE) with an LGBT strand and the group remain active and effective on equalities issues and awareness raising across the council.
7. In York schools there has been a greater involvement in seeking to address LGBT issues. Through the work of the council and pastoral leads in schools, homophobic bullying has reduced city wide from 4.3% in 2013 to 2.4% in 2014 (cohort 1,000 year 8 pupils).
8. The council has been working with the York LGBT forum (schools group) for the past 3 years and several schools are now members of Stonewall. Sir Ian McKellen visited York High School and Fulford School in October 2014 to talk to the students about being themselves and to stand up against prejudice. The Deputy Head Teacher from York High opened the 2014 York Pride event. Schools have been presented with a copy of 'It Gets Better – coming out and overcoming bullying'.
9. Submissions are made to Stonewall's Education Equality Index, an annual benchmarking exercise for local authorities from across the country showcasing how well they are tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in their schools. CYC was placed 32nd on the Education Equality Index in 2013 and 24th in 2014. Stonewall has suggested how to use the survey to gather more comprehensive data on the extent of

homophobic language and bullying in primary schools and identify the risk-taking behaviours that vulnerable groups such as LGBT young people take part in.

### **Other Plans**

10. In the new emerging Equalities Plan 'A Fairer York' the following priorities have been identified:

*Making York a welcoming city, respecting and celebrating diversity, building strong communities where people from different backgrounds respect each other and get on well together, where people feel safe and children are happy, tackling and preventing hate crime, bullying in schools (particularly against LGB pupils), anti-social behaviour, honour crime and domestic violence.*

*We will ensure that equality information is collected, monitored and used to improve access to services and service provision, and we will tackle negative and discriminatory attitudes from the public and service providers towards BME, LGBT, disabled people, those with a mental health condition and deaf people.*

11. The recommendations in this report will contribute to the achievement of these priorities and will inform the use of other such frameworks for workforce improvement activity related to BME and disabled communities in particular.

### **Feedback from the EFLG Peer Review**

12. There is an issue regarding a lack of knowledge about the percentage of the York population who identify as LGBT as census data is deemed statistically insignificant. A regional indicator for Yorkshire & Humber is available to which the council's workforce compares favourably (1.3% and 1.7% respectively).
13. Although steadily improving, the declaration rates regarding sexual orientation within the council's workforce are still low and this was picked up in the by the assessors in the recent peer review. An extract from their draft report states:

*There are low self-disclosure rates by staff across disability, LGBT and faith/religion. The Council needs to further consider ways to consider how to close the gaps in disclosure of protected characteristics. It already encourages the use of self-reporting via iTrent. It needs to improve the messages behind collection of this information to increase declaration rates. One approach may be to identify and adopt approaches from elsewhere such as Stonewall's monitoring campaign 'What's it got to do with you?'*

14. The council has undertaken a number of "What's it got to do with you?" campaigns and will continue to do so.

### **What is the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme?**

15. The Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme offers advice and support to over 650 organisations including IBM, Barclays, Barnardos, Communities & Local Government (CLG) and the Royal Navy.
16. The programme is a good practice forum for employers on sexual orientation. Key benefits include:
  - Many networking opportunities and access to the hundreds of other members;
  - An allocated client account manager with knowledge of best practice in the local government sector and /or region. Account managers can be available and agree to speak at events;
  - Opportunity to benchmark CYC performance against other employers via the **Workplace Equality Index (WEI)**;
  - Free access to the seminar series, held across the UK (although mainly in London and the South). A range of topics covered include: Higher Education Workshops; The power of Networks; How to manage a Diverse Workforce; Bullying and Harassment; Straight Allies,

- Discounted rates for workplace conferences, leadership programmes and diversity training (via DVDs and e-learning);
- Free research and good practice guides;
- Visibility and employer branding would allow the use the diversity champion's logo internally and externally;
- Advertisement on Stonewalls' job website – new members receive free job listings for four weeks (worth £500).

## **Consultation**

17. Consultation activity has been undertaken with the council's workforce and also with the following organisations:

- Agape
- Aviva Pride
- Generate
- HLGBT Performing Arts York
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation LGBT Staff Network
- LGBT Coffee and Cake
- L-Lit: York Lesbian Reading Group
- Thomas's Bar York/The Nag's Head/The Corner Pin
- University of York LGBTI Matters – Staff Sexual Diversity and Equality Forum
- University of York LGBTQ Postgraduate Network
- York Lesbian Social Group
- York LGBT Forum
- York LGBT History Month
- York LGBT Social Group
- York Pride
- York St John University LGBT Staff Network
- York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust LGBT Staff Network
- York Third Saturday
- Yorkshire MESMAC
- York St John LGBT+
- York University Students Union LGBTQ

18. Consultation feedback is summarised in Annex A to this report, is positive and in support of the recommendation to join the Stonewall Programme.

## Options

19. Options are:
- a. To approve membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme or;
  - b. To reject the recommendation.

## Analysis

### Experience of other organisations

20. A number of organisations were contacted to gather their views and opinions of being part of the Diversity Champions Programme and also their submission of the Workplace Equality Index (all whom are ranked within the top 100 employers). Ten local authorities were contacted and information was gained from four (Leicester, Nottinghamshire, Brighton and Hove and Bury). Experiences were also gathered from two other employers within York, namely Joseph Rowntree Foundation and York St John University.
21. Although most organisations were generally supportive of the programme, two organisations no longer saw the value. This is summarised below:

#### Positives:

- Good for helping to shape LGBT equality policy;
- Good opportunity for a variety of teams to work together. *Some organisations form 'working groups' to drive forward, for example chair of network(s); HR; Communities and Equalities, Policy Development, Communications, Learning and Development;*
- Campaigns/posters/booklets are available to diversity champions and can be used for generic equality events (e.g. to support hate crime/anti bullying events/training line managers etc);

- Stonewall very supportive and advise when preparing WEI submission;
- CYC has been invited to come along to a conference taking place in May in Leicester.

### **Challenges:**

- Very time consuming;
- Takes a number of years to be ranked within the top 100 (generally between 2 and 6);
- Ongoing commitment needed to maintain ranking and continuous improvement;
- Some think the WEI is too specific / narrow;
- Some are trying to withdraw as they have dropped down the rankings – this can bring reputational risks;
- It can distract an organisation its overall equalities and diversity journey.

### **Resourcing**

22. Should the membership of the Stonewall challenge be approved it is recommended that a cross council network of officers take the work forward.
23. This would be managed and monitored through the council's Fairness Leadership Group with Human Resources support and involvement.
24. Effectiveness and progress will be monitored by the councillor Diversity Champion and through the Corporate & Management Scrutiny Committee in its monitoring of the workforce and related equality indicators.

### **Council Plan**

25. Agreement to the recommendations in this report will contribute to the council's core capability of being a confident and collaborative organisation.

## **Implications**

26.

(a) **Financial**

The annual membership fee of £2500 will be funded from existing budgets.

(b) **Human Resources**

See content of the report. Specific resources will need to be identified in Human Resources to support any working group established to deliver the Stonewall Champions work.

(c) **Equalities**

See content of the report and attached Communities Impact Assessment at Annex B.

(d) **Legal**

This report will assist CYC with meeting and exceeding its obligations under equalities legislation.

(e) **Crime and Disorder**

There are no implications for crime and disorder.

(f) **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no implications for IT.

(g) **Property**

There are no implications for property.

(h) **Other**

Other implications are covered in the body of the report.



## **Risk Management**

27. There are no significant risks associated with joining the Stonewall Programme, only benefits in terms of creating an environment where all employees are able to reach their full potential. A reputational risk could be perceived if progress is not made in progressing within the Workforce Equality Index.

## **Recommendations**

28. For the Cabinet Leader to:
  - a. approve the CYC membership of the Stonewall Challenge.
  - b. note that resourcing and oversight of the programme will sit with the Fairness Leadership Group with the support of Human Resources.
  - c. commit the monitoring of the programme to the Corporate & Management Scrutiny Committee.

Reason: To continue the work on creating an environment where all employees are able to reach their full potential.

## Contact Details

<b>Authors:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Responsible for the report:</b>			
Pauline Stuchfield AD Customers & Employees 01904 551706	Cabinet Leader			
	<b>Report Approved</b>	√	<b>Date</b>	9 March 2015
<b>Specialist Implications Officer(s)</b>				
<b>Wards Affected:</b>			<b>All</b>	√
<b>For further information please contact the author of the report</b>				

### Background Papers:

Workforce Strategy 2012-15:

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=6682&Ver=4>

**Annex A** Comments and feedback on CYC joining Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme.

**Annex B** Community Impact Assessment