

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Annual update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Date: 22nd May 2025

Author: Deputy Chief Executive

Wards Affected

All Wards

Purpose

To update members on the progress made across the Council on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion actions as well as other work undertaken in relation to improving equality, diversity and inclusion in the provision of Council services since the adoption of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in 2024/25.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the work undertaken on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the wider work undertaken by officers and members to strengthen the Council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in the performance of its functions.

1 Background

- 1.1 In March 2024, Cabinet approved an amended Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy following public consultation. As part of the agreed approach to EDI, actions supporting the policy were agreed as part of service planning for 2024/25. This report provides an update on work carried out under the policy and associated actions in 2024/25. A detailed progress report against equality actions taken from the Council's performance

management system is attached at Appendix 1. This report sets out more broadly the achievements under the policy since implementation and references future action to be completed.

- 1.2 The EDI Policy references the need to report annually to Cabinet on progress. Work in relation to EDI has been monitored closely in 2024/25 by the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group, led by the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerability and Life Chances and supported by the Policy Advisor, and an update on EDI was also provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Portfolio Holder update on 10th March 2025.

1.3 **Strategic Equality and Diversity Group**

The policy document sets out the responsibilities for equality and diversity within the Council and references a Strategic Equality and Diversity Group (SEDG) with membership consisting of the Leader and Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder and Policy Adviser with responsibility for equalities, a member from each opposition group, the Chief Executive and Director responsible for Equalities (currently the Deputy Chief Executive). This group has met on a quarterly basis throughout 2024/25. In particular, the following initiatives and work streams have been developed and supported by the SEDG in 2024/25:

- Supporting the staff EDI group GIGs, considering recommendations from the group and supporting implementation including the recent staff survey on inclusion.
- Review of hate crime data to establish any trends affecting communities.
- Contributed to the recent internal audit by BDO of the Council's EDI function and considered resulting recommendations for implementation.
- Reviewed all equality related complaints and recommended appropriate action to mitigate.
- Contributed to the communications plan for 2024/25 to ensure appropriate support of equality related events and initiatives.
- Received regular updates on changes to employment legislation in relation to EDI.
- Received feedback on the Council's Social Mobility Commission which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerability and Life Chances.

1.4 Officer Equality Group

This officer group was established in March 2023 to support SEDG and co-ordinate different equality related work across the organisation. The group review the framework and action plan and equality complaints, providing updates to SEDG. Due to restructure and staffing changes in 2024/25 the group's membership reduced, as part of the wider Council governance arrangements, performance against EDI is now part of the Budget and Performance Board and the Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Workforce update on progress and have supported continued actions for 2025/26 as part of the Annual Delivery Plan.

1.5 Training

The Council rolled out an online mandatory Equality and Diversity Training module for staff in 2022, all staff with PC access are required to complete the training and to ensure accountability, those who do not complete within a reasonable timescale may face disciplinary action. This training was also provided for Members following the election in May 2023 and was accompanied by a briefing note.

For staff working within depot services, separate face to face EDI training was developed, however it has been identified by SEDG and following internal audit that more bespoke EDI training is required for frontline staff. This will be rolled out in 2025/26, also recommended through audit was more tailored management training for EDI which will also be developed in 2025/26.

Housing Needs staff were provided with some enhanced mental health awareness training in 2024/25.

1.6 Equality Framework and Action Plan

The Council's original Equality Framework and Action Plan was developed taking into account the Local Government Association Equality framework for Local Government. The EDI actions agreed for 2024/25 were aimed at improving the Council's performance against that framework which covers four themes:

- Understanding and working with your communities
- Leadership and organisational commitment
- Responsive services and customer care
- Diverse and engaged workforce

- 1.7 For 2024/25 20 actions were agreed. Of those 11 have completed, 8 have begun progressing but will continue into next year and one has not started but will be carried into next year. Completed actions include:
- Delivering health inequality work in targeted localities including Carlton and Netherfield
 - Considering EDI implications as part of wider Leisure Strategy work.
 - Engaged in the production of a corporate consultation strategy
 - Recruitment and Selection Training delivered includes avoiding bias
 - A variety of work placements and supported internships have been supported in 2024/25
- 1.8 The outstanding actions which have commenced but not completed will be carried into 2025/26. A number of these actions relate to wider transformation work and as such have been put back to align with the wider programme, for example ensuring citizen feedback is obtained on transformation. Also, wider reviews of workforce policies are underway and will continue into 2025/26 including an updated harassment Policy to reflect requirements to include information in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace. As previously indicated a wider training offer will be considered in 2025/26 including support on dealing with equality related complaints. The one action which has not commenced in 2024/25 but will carry over is the consideration of EDI implications as part of a new funding strategy. The funding strategy has not been commenced in 2024/25 due to capacity and will be undertaken in 2025/26.
- 1.9 In 2024/25 the Council were audited by BDO in relation to EDI (Appendix 2). The audit was based on assessment against BDOs Equality Diversity and Inclusion matrix. This is a different framework to the LGA one which the Council have adopted and as such the results differ slightly. Overall, the performance as highlighted within the audit is good. There were a number of advisory recommendations some of which have been accepted and will form the EDI actions for 2025/26 including, the wider provision of training to managers and frontline staff.
- 1.10 The Gedling Inclusion Group (GIGs) is an officer group made up of representatives across service areas. The group meet regularly to discuss EDI and report into SEDG meetings. Most recently, the group launched a staff survey into EDI and reported the findings into Senior Leadership team. The survey resulted in a number of actions being accepted by SLT, these have been included in the EDI action plan for

2025/26 (Appendix 3).

1.11 In addition to the action plan there has been a range of activity to support EDI in 2024/25 including:

- GBC produced a Leisure Accessibility Video
- Celebration of International Women's Day 2025 "Accelerate Action" – Women's market @ the AMP – local businesses – talks – menopause and confidence workshops – self-defence classes – focus on female Cabinet Members – Tech business owner Comms feature
- Black History Month 2024: Digging Deep exhibition at the Civic Centre
- Windrush day: Skin and Coal film shown at The Bonington – June 2025
- Standing In This Place, statue unveiling in Nottingham City Centre: The Council contributed to this statue and were supported by the Caribbean Elders
- Sensory Garden for the Blind in Carlton supported by the Council through UKSPF funding
- World Peace Day at Gedling Country Park: Different Faiths brought together
- Arnold Summer Fair: Multicultural performances & food. Created accessibility for older people & people with disabilities, LGBTQI recognition & activities

1.12 It should be noted that whilst both officer and member resource has been deployed to support the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, no additional, dedicated resource has been provided. The Council must ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and has maintained its statutory responsibilities in terms of the publication of Equality objectives in the Gedling Plan 2023-27 as well as publicising data on gender pay gap.

2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet note the work undertaken by officers and members in relation to the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, the wider EDI work undertaken and the work proposed for 2025/26.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 This information could not be reported, however, it is considered important that members are informed of the progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan and the Council's policy document references reporting to members.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 In terms of the financial implications, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 As indicated, there is no dedicated resource associated with the equality agenda and the work and associated budgets form part of approved budgets within service areas.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The policy, and action plan demonstrates how the Council seeks to comply with its Public Sector Equality Duty. In addition, the SEDG receive updates on any relevant case law or significant legislative changes to ensure compliance with equality law.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 By its nature this report seeks to update members of the Council's work to strengthen equality of access to services for residents and staff. The work undertaken by the Council in respect of EDI has a positive impact on those with protected characteristics.

7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Action Plan 2024/25

Appendix 2 – BDO audit on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Appendix 3 – Draft Actions for 2025/26

9 Background Papers

9.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

10 Reasons for Recommendations

10.1 To update the Executive on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work undertaken in 24/25.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer