

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

25<sup>th</sup> October 2018



**Report of:** Mike Jackson

**Title:** Equality and Inclusion Strategy

**Ward:** N/A

**Officer Presenting Report:** Jean Candler

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## Recommendation

For the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider and comment on the revised Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy before it is considered for adoption by Full Council on 13 November 2018.

## The significant issues in the report are:

To publish a revised Equality and Inclusion Policy (alongside an accompanying five year strategy to implement this activity), ensuring we meet our statutory obligations as set out under the Public Sector Equality Duty, as well as considering broader aspirations to address inequalities.

## **1. Summary**

The report sets out a revised Equality and Inclusion Policy alongside a strategy to meet our key objectives over the next 5 years. It demonstrates the links with the recently approved Bristol Equality Charter. The equality objectives identified to form the core of the strategy are:

1. Our handling of equality and inclusion will reach the high standards we expect of ourselves and others will look to us as a source of good practice.
2. To build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the city we serve and the needs of all citizens, and where colleagues feel confident about being themselves at work.
3. To provide inclusive services which actively address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Bristol's citizens to realise their potential and live safely.
4. To achieve a measurable increase in the extent to which communities facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.
5. Progressive building of good relationships between different communities in Bristol so everyone is able to participate and contribute.

This strategy dovetails with the vision and activities of the draft organisational improvement plan. This describes the corporate activities we will undertake to help us adapt to the future needs of the organisation and deliver our objectives and high quality services for the citizens of Bristol. The plan has a workstream dedicated to diversity and inclusion and outlines the detailed actions we will take to support the workforce in delivering this equality and inclusion strategy.

## **2. Context**

The Equalities Review published in June 2018 included a recommendation for the council to urgently develop a new equalities policy and strategy.

## **3. Policy**

In our business plans for 2018/19 we committed to 'Conduct a review of our approach to equalities, including our strategy, governance and policy to strengthen practice across all service areas.'

The Corporate Strategy describes the aspirations for the future organisation, one where we innovate and improve, ensuring the council is one that people are proud of and which delivers its priorities to high standards.

## **4. Consultation**

### **a) Internal**

This policy and strategy has been reviewed by Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Asher Craig, Resources and Communities Executive Directors' Meetings, and Corporate Leadership Board. As well there has been engagement with relevant colleagues and Staff Led Groups (SLGs). The SLGs have highlighted concerns regarding for example, unconscious bias, which they'd like to see addressed in

the strategy. Trade union representatives were engaged during the equality review and the strategy has been sent to them for consultation.

## **b) External**

We have also engaged with VCS organisations (eg Voice and Influence Partnership) and Race and Women’s Commissions, and these groups support the approach and have provided suggestions such as how to use these partnerships and the Bristol Equality Network (being established following the launch of the Equality Charter) to address inequalities and helping identify ‘pathways’ for career progression through forging links with other relevant training and opportunities available in the city.

## **5. Public Sector Equality Duties**

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
  - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
    - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
    - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities);
    - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
  - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
    - tackle prejudice; and
    - promote understanding.
- 5b) The Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy set the standards and mechanism to ensure the council fulfils its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The draft Equality Impact Assessment is attached as an appendix.

## **Appendices:**

A - Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy

B - Equality Impact Assessment

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:**

None