

**REPORT UNDER RULE 2(VI) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

**Report by Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Chair of Equality and Diversity Group**

**Introduction**

This is my second report to Council as Chair of the Equality and Diversity Group. The report covers the period from April 2018 to January 2019.

I have been chair of the group since September 2017, prior to which Councillor Gill Clayton-Hewson was chair. In April 2018 I provided an update report to Council on the work of the group between November 2016 and March 2018. This latest report brings Council members up to date with the most recent work of the group in line with Council reporting timescales.

I would like to thank each member of the Equality and Diversity Group and the officers for their ongoing support.

The Equality and Diversity Group is an informal advisory working group rather than a formal committee. The membership of the group comprises of elected members and officers and is an important part of council functions as it gives elected members an opportunity to discuss equality and diversity with the relevant officers and to give members the chance to share their views. It also allows the Council to look at its policies, services and practices and consider whether there needs to be further equality adjustments made.

The members who sit on the Equality and Diversity Group are:

- Cllr Naomi Tweddle (Chair)
- Cllr Rosanne Kirk (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr Gill Clayton-Hewson
- Cllr Thomas Dyer
- Cllr Alan Briggs
- Cllr Sue Burke
- Cllr Chris Burke
- Cllr Ric Metcalfe

**Summary of Main Work**

The Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires public sector organisations to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Equality and Diversity Group is primarily interested in the first two parts of the duty, with the third part coming under Councillor Rosanne Kirk's portfolio, Reducing Inequality.

The group has met once since the last report to Council in April 2018. This meeting was in September 2018 where we discussed the following:

- Progress on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2018/19
- Equality Journal 2017/18

We continue to focus the Equality and Diversity Group agenda on working towards the council's five equality objectives. The five objectives for 2016-20 are:

- Objective 1: Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds
- Objective 2: Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them
- Objective 3: Equality is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the council
- Objective 4: Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community
- Objective 5: Equalities, social inclusion and community cohesion have all improved with our communities

Some key activities which have been undertaken are set out below.

In 2017 the council ran a pilot for changing places toilets at Lincoln Christmas Market, a review of this pilot was completed in May 2018 and a decision was taken to provide similar toilets at the 2018 Lincoln Christmas Market. Changing Places toilets help to meet the needs of all users with a disability. These users can include people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities including muscular dystrophy, spinal injuries and multiple sclerosis where specialist equipment and extra space is needed to allow the individual to use the toilets safely and comfortably.

An arrangement has been confirmed for the use of the People's Partnership in respect of consultation, particularly relating to equality analyses. This arrangement ensures key decisions and new policies fully consider the equality and diversity impacts on residents and individuals. The People's Partnership provides a voice for people that have different protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

To help services avoid the risk of discrimination against any resident when delivering its services, the council has developed a new corporate Equality Monitoring Form. The new form is available to all members of staff on the council's intranet, City People. The form is used in part or in full when services need to find out about the makeup of the community it is serving. All staff are reminded when using this form to only ask for information which is essential for the purpose of collection, in order to comply with GDPR regulations.

The council supported Domestic Abuse Awareness Week 2018, which took place between Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018. During the week the council helped to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the impact this can have on individuals to both staff and residents in the city. The topic of domestic abuse is also now being incorporated into the council's Protecting Vulnerable People (formally safeguarding) meeting.

A menopause policy is being produced by the council in order to provide clearer guidelines for supporting employees that are going through the menopause. This is an excellent step forward and it is something which the Equality and Diversity Group were keen to be produced. It will give more support to employees that were experiencing menopause symptoms that can affect them at work.

The council has developed an area on its website to help promote the City of Lincoln Council's apprenticeship scheme to potential applicants. The aim of this is to encourage more applicants, especially those not in employment, education or training, to take advantage of this training and development opportunity available, and to also continue to improve the diversity of the council's workforce. In addition to the website, the council has also used social media to further raise awareness of apprenticeship vacancies and events.

The council continues to promote equality and diversity to staff through four equality notice boards at City Hall and one equality notice board at Hamilton House. Equality and diversity news stories, training opportunities and events are regularly promoted on these boards to help encourage staff to consider equality and diversity in their job roles at all times. Additionally, the council continues to have a dedicated equality and diversity area on the staff intranet, and also regularly promotes equality and diversity news, events and training opportunities via City People and the In Brief newsletter. Externally, the council continues to promote equality news stories and events on the council's social media pages to raise awareness amongst residents.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all local authorities to evidence the corporate equality actions completed each year. The 2017/18 Equality Journal provides evidence of the actions completed by the council during the financial year 2017/18. Also included in the journal are the latest Lincoln and workforce demographics showing how these have changed over time. For further information members might like to take a look at the journal which is available on the council's website - [www.lincoln.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity](http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity).

## **Concluding Comments**

I would like to finish my report by looking forward to the year ahead.

A comprehensive action plan has been developed for the period 2018/19, which draws together all the equality actions identified in service plans. Of the 27 actions included in the plan, 13 are complete, 12 are progressing and two are yet to commence at the time of writing this report.

Looking ahead it is important that we continue to strive to ensure that the work of the council is always mindful of equality and diversity and that we don't inadvertently discriminate. This is particularly pertinent when we are changing services or working on projects.

The 2019/20 equality action plan will be developed in early 2018/19 and, as with the 2018/19 action plan, will draw together equality actions identified in service plans for the coming year.

The next Equality and Diversity Group meeting is scheduled to take place in March 2019.

**Councillor Naomi Tweddle**  
**Chair of Equality and Diversity Group**