

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

**Report by Councillor Emily Wood,  
Chair of Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
1.1	In May 2024 I was appointed as the Chair of the Council's Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel, taking over this role from Councillor Joshua Wells who has moved into the position of Portfolio Holder for Inclusive Economic Growth.
1.2	I would like to thank Councillor Wells for his time as Chair of the Panel and for driving forward the equality & diversity agenda during this time. I look forward to continuing this work alongside service areas and members of the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel.
1.3	Within this report I have provided a reminder of the Council's equality objectives and the equality and diversity legislation the Council must adhere to, provided an update on the work of the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel over the past year, together with an insight into some of the key equality & diversity focused activity progressed by service areas during this time.
1.4	A sustained focus on equality & diversity is extremely important to ensure our service users continue to be able to easily access the support and guidance they require, whilst also ensuring we continue to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.
<b>2</b>	<b>Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010</b>
2.1	<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to consider all individuals when carrying out day to day work when shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to our own employees.</p> <p>It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Our Equality Objectives</b>
3.1	The Council has five equality objectives in place, which we strive to meet on a rolling basis through the delivery of a range of equality and diversity focused activities and through the services we provide. These objectives link into the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010. The equality

	objectives were introduced in 2020 alongside the Council's new strategic plan at this time, Vision 2025.										
3.2	<p>The Council's five equality objectives currently in place are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our services are more accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds</li> <li>• Local communities and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them</li> <li>• Equality is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the Council</li> <li>• Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community</li> <li>• Equalities, social inclusion and community cohesion have all improved with our communities</li> </ul> <p>The objectives will be reviewed as part of the development of the Council's new strategic plan, Vision 2030, to ensure they remain appropriate and in line with the priorities of this plan.</p>										
<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Advisory Panel</b>										
4.1	<p>The Equality &amp; Diversity Advisory Panel is a working group formed of elected members and officers. The Panel works to ensure equality and diversity remains fully embedded across the Council.</p> <p>The Panel meets twice each year usually in the months of February and October and has the option to add further meetings should these be required.</p>										
4.2	<p>The Equality &amp; Diversity Advisory Panel is currently formed of the following elected members –</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>- Cllr Emily Wood (Chair)</td><td>- Cllr Thomas Dyer</td></tr> <tr> <td>- Cllr Sue Burke (Vice-Chair)</td><td>- Cllr Gary Hewson</td></tr> <tr> <td>- Cllr Naomi Tweddle</td><td>- Cllr Anita Pritchard</td></tr> <tr> <td>- Cllr James Brown</td><td>- Cllr Dylan Stothard</td></tr> <tr> <td>- Cllr Laura Danese</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>I would like to welcome the new members joining the Panel from May 2024 and to thank the previous and current members for their work on the Panel and their support towards equality and diversity to date.</p>	- Cllr Emily Wood (Chair)	- Cllr Thomas Dyer	- Cllr Sue Burke (Vice-Chair)	- Cllr Gary Hewson	- Cllr Naomi Tweddle	- Cllr Anita Pritchard	- Cllr James Brown	- Cllr Dylan Stothard	- Cllr Laura Danese	
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- Cllr James Brown	- Cllr Dylan Stothard										
- Cllr Laura Danese											
4.3	Working alongside the elected members above, the Panel also consists of council officers representing the service areas of Human Resources, Corporate Policy & Transformation, Customers Services and Legal.										
4.4	Provided below are details of the agenda items discussed by the Equality & Diversity Advisory Panel in February 2024, ahead of myself taking up the role of Chair of the Panel, together with the agenda items for the most recent meeting of the Panel taking place in October 2024.										

	<p><u>28 February 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality &amp; Diversity Action Plan Update</li> <li>- Equality &amp; Diversity Census Data 2011 &amp; 2021</li> <li>- The Government's Disability Action Plan</li> <li>- Applicants for City of Lincoln Council Job Vacancies</li> <li>- Gender Pay Gap</li> </ul> <p><u>9 October 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality Journal April 2023 to March 2024</li> <li>- Equality and Diversity Action Plan Update</li> </ul> <p>At the meeting on 9 October 2024, it was also agreed to form a Task &amp; Finish Group to review our current equality objectives alongside the development of Vision 2030.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity Action Plan and Annual Equality Journal</b>
5.1	<p>The Council has a rolling Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which contains a live list of the key equality and diversity focused actions being progressed across the Council at any one time.</p> <p>Progress on the actions within the plan is reported to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel at each meeting. New actions are added into the plan as and when required.</p> <p>All actions are presented and monitored under the most relevant equality objective. Currently there are 25 actions within the live plan.</p>
5.2	<p>On an annual basis the Council produces an Equality Journal. The Journal acts as an equality and diversity annual report and includes information on the equality and diversity focused activity progressed by the Council during the previous year drawn from the action plan and from wider across Council services.</p> <p>Additionally, the Journal also presents the latest demographic information available for the City of Lincoln, together with the latest information on the makeup of the Council's workforce.</p>
5.3	<p>The latest Equality Journal covering the period April 2023 to March 2024 was presented to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel in October 2024 and is expected to be presented to Council in November 2024 ahead of publication on the <a href="#">council's website</a> and staff intranet.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Examples of Equality and Diversity Focused Activity Progressed over the Past Year</b>
6.1	<p>Provided below is an insight into some of the equality and diversity focused activity progressed within service areas over the past year. Some of the</p>

	<p>examples provided are drawn from the latest Equality Journal as referenced above.</p> <p>I would encourage all members to review the latest Equality Journal upon its publication.</p>
6.2	<p><b>Reviewed the most frequently used languages included within the Council's alternative formats document</b></p> <p>At the end of all Council publications is included a section informing the reader how they can access the publication in an alternative format. The alternative formats guidance document, which informs this section, continues to be reviewed on at least an annual basis to ensure the alternative language translations included reflect the most frequently spoken languages in the city, together with the Council's latest translation and interpretation request data. A review of the alternative formats document took place in June 2024 as planned and confirmed the language translations currently included remained the most frequently spoken languages within the city.</p> <p>In advance of this scheduled review, following an increase in the number of Nigerian, Ghanaian and Indian residents moving to Lincoln, in early 2024 the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel asked whether Nigerian, Ghanaian and additional Indian language translations needed to be included within the guidance document.</p> <p>A subsequent exercise took place working with the University of Lincoln's International Team, the Customer Services Team at the Council and a local pastor working with the African community to determine whether additional language translations needed to be included within in the guidance document to further support our customers.</p> <p>Following this exercise, it was determined that at the time Nigerian, Ghanaian and additional Indian language translations were not required within this document. The Council will continue to review demographic data and translation &amp; interpretation data moving forward and ensure additional language translations are included if required.</p>
6.3	<p><b>Continued to deliver staff, member, and external equality and diversity communications</b></p> <p>Communicating information on the topic of equality and diversity and key equality and diversity dates and events to our staff, members and residents continues to be undertaken. Over the past year the Council's Communications Team has raised awareness of a range of equality and diversity topics via the Council's social media channels. Some examples include World Mental Health Day, International Day of Peace, Remembrance Day, Diwali, Christmas and Holocaust Memorial Day. Additionally, the above topics were also communicated to staff and members via internal briefings. Communication of a range of equality and diversity focused topics will continue over the year ahead.</p>

6.4	<p><b>Cost of living support and Lincoln Against Poverty</b></p> <p>Helping our residents to overcome the continuing cost of living challenges has remained a high priority for the Council during the past year.</p> <p>Equality and diversity has been considered throughout the promotion and delivery of this essential support with a focus on ensuring our residents are aware of the support available to them and how to access this. Raising awareness of the support available has been supported by the Council's Communications Team.</p> <p>Information on the cost of living support available is provided via the Council's website - <a href="https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/benefits/cost-living-support">https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/benefits/cost-living-support</a>. Information provided on this section of the Council's website includes how to access support focused on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Benefits</li> <li>- Energy saving and energy efficiency</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Food and hygiene</li> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Warm spaces</li> <li>- Well-being</li> </ul> <p>With the cost of living challenges continuing, the Council and partners have recently commenced work to develop a new Lincoln Against Poverty Strategy. The aim of the strategy is to help ensure those living in poverty, or at risk of poverty, are supported to help them to navigate the difficulties they are facing. Further information on the strategy will be shared with members as this work progresses.</p>
6.5	<p><b>Delivered a face to face consultation event with residents with different lived experiences and backgrounds</b></p> <p>The Council regularly seeks feedback on our service delivery and future proposals from members of the Lincoln Citizens' Panel, via city wide resident consultations and via consultation with specific groups of residents. Feedback is primarily collected via questionnaires completed online or by post.</p> <p>In January 2024, working with a local organisation called Every One, the Council delivered a face to face consultation event on the Council's budget proposals for the coming year. Residents with different lived experiences and backgrounds were invited to attend.</p> <p>The key areas where feedback was sought included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our vision and priorities</li> <li>- Financial context</li> <li>- Our budget proposals for 2024/25</li> <li>- How we spend our budget</li> <li>- Delivering savings</li> </ul>

	<p>- Council Tax</p> <p>This face to face engagement activity was support by a city wide consultation, which was shared via the Council's website and social media channels, together with shared with members of the Lincoln Citizens' Panel and local businesses.</p> <p>Collectively the event and wider consultation was a success and helped to ensure residents from across the city could provide feedback on the Council's proposals for the year ahead.</p> <p>Further engagement activity utilising the routes above is planned moving forwards to ensure our residents have the opportunity to feedback on future proposals and service delivery.</p>
6.6	<p><b>Continued to ensure the Council's website meets accessibility legislation</b></p> <p>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard, which must be met by all government and public sector websites. The standard helps to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>In the UK, public sector websites and mobile apps must meet level AA by October 2024. These regulations aim to ensure that all public service websites are accessible to everyone, including individuals requiring additional support due to visual, cognitive, or hearing impairments.</p> <p>The Corporate Policy &amp; Transformation Team has been working to achieve the new compliance standards and at the time of writing this report the Council's website has 97% accessibility compliance, giving us the required AA rating for WCAG. This is an improvement of 2% from the previous year, which is notably high.</p>
6.7	<p><b>Published the latest Gender Pay Gap information for the Council</b></p> <p>Each year the Council publishes its Gender Pay Gap, which shows how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The latest figures available are as at 31 March 2023.</p> <p>At this date, the Gender Pay Gap figures were as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mean gender pay gap was 0.6%</li> <li>- The median gender pay gap was 3.6%</li> <li>- The mean gender bonus gap was 0% (please note the Council does not have any bonus schemes)</li> <li>- The median gender bonus gap was 0%</li> <li>- The proportion of male employees receiving a bonus was 0% and the proportion of female employees receiving a bonus was 0%</li> </ul>

	The table below shows the Council's workforce split into four equal-sized groups based on hourly pay rate.			
	<b>Pay quartiles by gender</b>			
	<b>Band</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	40%	60%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them at or below the lower quartile.
	B	48%	52%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the lower quartile but at or below the median.
	C	51%	49%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the median but at or below the upper quartile.
	D	44%	56%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the upper quartile.
	<p>The Council remains confident that the gender pay gap is not as a result of paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work but is as a result of the roles in which men and women work at the Council and the salaries that these roles attract.</p> <p>The Council remains committed to ensuring our employees receive equal treatment and equal opportunity and has an action plan in place with a focus on reducing the gender pay gap further.</p>			
6.8	<p><b>Continued to offer a range of health &amp; wellbeing support to our workforce</b></p> <p>Having a happy, healthy and fully supported workforce is a key priority for the Council. Over the past year the council has provided our staff with a range of benefit and support mechanisms. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A men's suicide prevention charity, Andy's Man Club, has delivered presentations to staff based at City Hall and Hamilton House</li> <li>- The Menopause Café was relaunched as the Health and Wellbeing Café (women through the ages). This has helped to widen scope for discussions.</li> <li>- The mental health training "Looking after your teams mental health" has now been developed into a e-learning package and is available for all staff.</li> <li>- The Council raised awareness of Mental Health Awareness Week which took place from 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May.</li> <li>- A community group has been launched to provide a safe space for members of the LGBTQ+ community (or those questioning) to come together to support each other, discuss a range of topics and potentially arrange events and socials.</li> <li>- The benefits the Council has in place that will help employees' money go further (such as employee discounts) have been promoted to staff.</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial Wellbeing online courses along with Pension Pre-Retirement courses have also been promoted to our staff.</li> <li>- A “Know your numbers” event has been delivered, which involved GP referral trained coaches from Active Nation being on hand to undertake blood pressure and BMI checks and offer general health and dietary advice.</li> <li>- The flu vaccination scheme has been promoted with all Council employees continuing to be eligible to request a flu vaccination voucher (unless an employee is eligible to receive a free vaccination through their GP).</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the health and wellbeing support above, the Council has also continued to be committed and accredited to the following schemes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employers for Carers Charter signatory</li> <li>- Dying to Work Charter signatory</li> <li>- Foster Friendly Employer signatory</li> <li>- Real Living Wage signatory</li> <li>- Mindful Employer and Disability Confident Employer</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Concluding Comments</b>
7.1	<p>I would like to thank members of the Equality &amp; Diversity Advisory Panel, together with officers and elected members from across the Council for their continued commitment towards equality and diversity over the past year.</p> <p>Equality and diversity is such an important topic, which must remain at the centre of everything we do. I look forward to continuing to progress the equality and diversity agenda at the Council over the year ahead, working alongside staff and elected members, to ensure the needs of our customers are fully met.</p>