

<b>Committee:</b> Establishment Committee	<b>Date:</b> 12 March 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Social Mobility: Employer Action Plan	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> The Town Clerk and Chrissie Morgan, Director of HR	<b>For information</b>
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### Summary

The City of London Corporation's (City Corporation's) feedback and ranking in the 2019 Social Mobility Employer Index (SMEI) was shared with Establishment Committee on 10 December 2019. The City Corporation's submission demonstrated that good progress has been made in a number of areas, whilst also highlighting sections that need to be developed further to try and achieve a higher ranking and meet our ambition as set out in the Social Mobility strategy. Establishment Committee agreed on the need for a clear and robust action plan showing what was going to be delivered going forward to address the feedback.

This paper provides an update on the activity underway to progress year two of the City Corporation's Social Mobility Strategy and provides information on what is being done corporately with the aim of improving the City Corporation's ranking in the Index.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The Social Mobility Strategy 2018-28, approved in September 2018 by Policy and Resources Committee, sets out a vision where *'People enjoy a society where individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds can flourish and reach their full potential'*. To achieve this, the strategy outlines four strategic outcomes:
  - a) Everyone can develop the skills and talent they need to thrive.
  - b) Opportunity is accessed more evenly and equally across society.
  - c) Businesses and organisations are representative and trusted.
  - d) We role model and enable social mobility in the way we operate as an organisation and employer.

2. In 2019, the City Corporation was ranked 56 out of 75 in the Social Mobility Employer Index (SMEI), rising 10 places compared to the previous year. The SMEI is an important benchmarking initiative which not only showcases the most forward-thinking organisations but also allows the City Corporation to demonstrate externally its commitment to accessing and progressing talents from all backgrounds.
3. The City Corporation ranked in the top 20% and 30% for its work with young people; advocacy; and progression, culture and experienced hires – with strong encouragement to continue its cultural and educational outreach work, its Staff Inclusive Networks, its work on apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships, and its work encouraging supply chains to act on social mobility. The City Corporation featured in the bottom 10% or 20% for recruitment and selection, and data collection.
4. The consistent recommendation throughout the feedback related to the City Corporation prioritising collecting social mobility related data on its apprentices, applicants, new entrants, current employees and leavers. The feedback also highlighted the need to better support and enable links between education and employment through bridging work targeted at the City Corporation's family of schools, outreach work and recruitment pipeline.

### **Legal context**

5. In July 2019, it was agreed by the Equalities & Inclusion (officer) Board that social mobility would be added as a consideration to the City Corporation's Equality Impact Assessments although it is not one of the nine protected characteristics we have a legal duty to consider under our Public Sector Equality Duty. We therefore plan to collect data on social mobility when we ask applicants, apprentices, new entrants, current employees and leavers for information about protected characteristics and embed social class in equality analysis documentation.
6. However, the City Corporation still has some way to go to ensure that equalities analysis is happening where and when it should throughout the organisation. Work to improve compliance is being led by the Equalities & Inclusion Board, chaired by the Town Clerk.

### **Current position of the strategy**

7. In January 2020, an organisation wide Action Plan was developed for Year Two of the Social Mobility Strategy (**Appendix 1**). The activities and interventions planned will continue to promote and progress social mobility and deliver against the outcomes set out in the strategy. The activities are further informed by the findings of the SMEI.
8. Taking a ten-year approach to the strategy is vital to ensure that the lasting impacts of the interventions planned in the action plan are fully realised through a sustainable commitment. There remains much to do in order to not only level the playing field, but to make it fairer too, thus ensuring everyone can participate,

compete and succeed. Therefore, the City Corporation's actions should be seen as long-term, methodical, interventions designed to deliver the most impact, which will continue to mature during the strategy's lifetime.

9. The activities for year two of the strategy will continue to be focussed around the following themes:
  - **Work with young people** and ensure that the City Corporation's outreach through its educational and cultural institutions continues to target schools with above average levels of free school meals, low levels of attainment or without existing relationships with a wide range of employers, whilst also linking it to the City Corporation's own recruitment pipeline.
  - **Work with partners**, such as the Social Mobility Foundation, the Social Mobility Commission and the Bridge Group, to organise and run events and activities that promote social mobility to business. This includes the recently launched 'Employer Toolkit'.
  - **Attract and recruit talent** as part of the 'Attracting Talent' programme and through offering an exemplary range of apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships.
  - **Progressing talent** through supporting our staff networks with senior Chairs and Sponsors.
  - Exploring options for London Funders, City Bridge Trust and City of London Corporation to work together to co-host a roundtable with cross-sectoral partners to promote and determine next steps on delivering work related to the Living Wage Places initiative in London.
  - Creating a positive chain reaction through encouraging our supply chains to take action on social mobility.
  - **Collecting data** that better evidences the impact of the City Corporation's work internally and externally.
  - Supporting the development of cultural and creative learning experiences that are sustainable, affordable, deliverable and inclusive.
10. More so, the Social Mobility strategy was designed so that best practice, both internally and externally, can be incorporated into the activities as delivery progresses. As such, on the recommendation from Establishment Committee in the December meeting, the Corporate Strategy and Performance team have reached out to Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), who ranked first overall in the Index for support, particularly in regard to attracting and progressing talent. A meeting is scheduled for this month.

## Next steps

11. In order to improve the City Corporation's ranking in the SMEI, Outcome 4 of the Social Mobility Strategy 'We role model and enable social mobility in the way we operate as an organisation and employer' needs further development in relation to recruitment and selection, and data collection.
12. In response to the feedback received, a HR Action Plan is being developed to sit alongside actions on gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps. This action plan will be in place in the next coming months. Key themes are set out below:

13. Data Collection: The main area identified for improvement centred around the collection of social mobility related data on applicants, apprentices, new entrants, current employees and leavers. Establishment Committee will recall that the Payroll/HR system is due to be retendered. That process is in train but is now part of a wider procurement exercise and the timeline for implementing a new system has been put back significantly. Collecting this type of data will be a positive mechanism to identify and reduce barriers into the workforce and help the organisation to measure its efforts to increase social mobility internally.
14. As part of our externally-facing work to promote social mobility in the financial and professional services sector, the City Corporation has commissioned the Bridge Group to undertake research to explore the link between job performance and career progression and retention, in relation to socio-economic background in Banking and Asset Management. The research will include quantitative investigation (collection, analysis, and benchmarking of socio-economic data) and interviews with a range of influencers and employees from a range of backgrounds.
15. As an interim measure whilst we wait to have our own data collection mechanisms put in place, the Bridge Group has offered to include the City Corporation in its research at no cost. Although the results will not be included in the final report (as the organisation is neither a bank nor asset management company), this will be a positive step towards understanding the socio-economic background of the City Corporation's workforce and will provide insights into factors affecting organisational performance, efficiency and stakeholder perceptions, as well as practicable recommendations for action within organisational contexts. The research will also help us identify questions to put to staff through the Employee Self Service online system and to use on job application forms and so build our own data.
16. An internal comms campaign will be run to encourage and drive uptake of the survey. This campaign is due to take place in the next couple of weeks. If a large number fill in the survey then this can be repeated in the annual staff survey, delivered by the Corporate Strategy & Performance Team to provide further social mobility data for analysis.
17. Recruitment and Selection: It must also be noted that the last round of submissions to the 2019 SMEI did not take into account the 'Attracting Talent' programme introduced by HR last year, developed with external advertising consultancy – TMP. The programme included a new recruitment website and a branding approach was designed to identify and reduce barriers into the workforce, support workforce planning, strengthen employer brand, increase number of senior females, increase BAME representation and progress social mobility internally and externally. This programme, which included a promotional video showing employee diversity within the organisation, including socio-economically diverse employees, goes a long way to address the negative perceptions from those outside of the organisation which need to be dispelled in order for the City Corporation to become an employer of choice and attract talent

and increase diversity. As such, it is expected that the City Corporation will improve its current docile rating around recruitment and selection in the Index.

18. **Work experience:** The City Corporation is committed to providing good quality work experience placements. Our school placement scheme is being redesigned in its format and placements will be available to all students. It is important that placements are not just offered to students at City schools and academies, but also from other schools (for example schools in lower socio-economic areas or in special measures by Ofsted) if approached. Moreover, to enhance the City Corporation's current work experience programme and to ensure the City Corporation meets its commitments under several initiatives it has signed up to, a number of additional options will gradually be added to the wider work experience programme, including 1+1 scheme, which ensures that as many children in care and care leavers scheme enter the scheme, the ex-forces programme, etc.
19. Submissions for the 2020 Social Mobility Employer Index are currently open and will close in May 2020. It is the intention of the City Corporation to enter, with the results published and shared with this committee in October. Annual submissions are vital in enabling the City Corporation to make tangible progress towards the delivery of the Social Mobility Strategy. More so, given the City Corporation's previous support to the Social Mobility Foundation it is important the it continues to champion the SMEI and work of the Foundation.
20. To ensure this work is happening and progressing at the right speed the Social Mobility Implementation Group will closely monitor progress. Additionally, appropriate social mobility KPIs have been built into the Corporate Performance Framework which will report to a Corporate Performance (officer) Board, due to be established later this year.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

21. The Social Mobility Strategy for 2018-23 was endorsed by this Committee and Policy & Resources in September 2018. The strategy supports the City Corporation's Corporate Plan for 2018-23, in terms of its vision for a 'vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally successful UK' and the strategic aims to contribute to a flourishing society and support a thriving economy. It specifically relates to outcomes 3, 5 and 8.
22. The City Corporation seed funded the SMEI and enters a submission to help gauge and steer its efforts as an employer and to demonstrate its commitment to accessing and progressing talent from all backgrounds.
23. Social mobility continues to be of high importance to the City Corporation and amongst the key external stakeholders that the organisation engages with regularly across central and local government, the private and business sectors, the education sector and parts of the charitable and community sector.

## **Resource Implications**

24. Most activities identified in the strategy are delivered as part of departmental budgets.
25. Collection of data will require an investment of resources into the Human Resources systems used by applicants, apprentices, new entrants, current employees and leavers as noted by this Committee in December.

## **Conclusion**

26. The City Corporation is committed to developing the areas highlighted by the SMEI for improvement including data collection. Despite delays in the retendering of the Payroll/HR system which mean data cannot yet be collected in an efficient way, a robust action plan is being developed to improve outcomes and inform the onwards development of the Social Mobility Strategy, 2018-28.

## **Appendices**

Year Two Action Plan for Social Mobility Strategy 2018-23. See Outcome 4 'We role model and enable social mobility in the way we operate as an organisation and employer' for actions discussed in this paper.

## **Background Papers**

<http://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/documents/s126354/SMEI%202019%20Results%20Establishment%20Committee%2010.12.19%20FINAL.pdf>

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