

<b>Committee(s):</b> Establishment Committee	<b>Date:</b> 17 January 2017
<b>Subject:</b> Equality and Inclusion Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Human Resources	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Tracey Jansen, Town Clerk's Department	

### Summary

This report provides Members with an update on equality and inclusion initiatives since my last report. The report advises Members of our plans to undertake a self-assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government; Chief Officers' renewed commitment to embedding equality and inclusion in their departments; new training, support and committee report writing guidance; and our response to recent legislative changes.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. At the meeting in October 2016 an update on the recruitment of senior staff was given. The Committee was also provided with advance copies of the Equality and Inclusion Annual Report. This report provides a more detailed review of equality and inclusion activity over the past few months.

#### Current Position

2. The Equality and Inclusion Board has continued to review progress against the 2016 Action Plan (Appendix 1). The new 2017 Action Plan will be developed following the completion of a Self-Assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to ensure a more robust action plan which demonstrates clear progress in embedding the equality and inclusion agenda across the City Corporation. The terms of reference for the Equality and Inclusion and the Staff Diversity Networks will be reviewed and considered by the Board at its January meeting.
3. It has been agreed by Summit Group that all Chief Officers will be invited to attend the Equality and Inclusion Board once a year to provide an update on how they are embedding equality and inclusion at the departmental level.

4. Chief Officers have also been asked to agree local equality measures to track the City Corporation's progress in meeting the Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 (a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty).
5. All Chief Officers have been asked to develop and monitor a departmental Equality & Inclusion Action Plan. This Action Plan will highlight how each department intends to address equalities issues and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **Training and support**

6. Three new online equality and inclusion training modules have been developed on City Learning and will be promoted through Colnet and other internal communications channels:
  - Equality in the Workplace
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Equality Analysis.
7. A series of Equality Analysis training courses for departmental equality representatives and HR Business Partners will be delivered in February and March 2017.
8. The Equality & Inclusion hub is on the opening page of the intranet and includes resources and information on all equality and inclusion issues.

### **Committee report writing guidance on equalities**

9. New committee report writing guidance on addressing equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is now in place and can be accessed on Colnet.
10. An audit of committee reports will take place in 2017 to identify how equalities considerations are being included in Committee reports where appropriate, and findings will be reported back to the Committee.

### **Staff Networks**

11. The Staff Networks have continued to hold quarterly meetings for their members and have also hosted various events for all staff in this financial year.
12. The Network leads were invited to participate in the recruitment process for the Director of Open Spaces and will be included in future Chief Officer recruitment exercises.

### **Code of Practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers**

13. The Immigration Act 2016 has introduced a statutory duty to ensure that all public authority workers working in customer facing roles speak fluent English or Welsh to an appropriate standard (the 'fluency duty'). The Code of Practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers has been issued under Part 7 of the Act.

14. The Code usefully sets out the considerations that public authorities need to take into account to meet the new duty placed on them. The aim of the requirement is to contribute to efficient and effective public services. The code sets out:

- the scope which includes all workers not just employees, but currently excludes the voluntary sector and private sector providers of public services;
- how authorities can set standards and in this regard it is not intended that the duty will be onerous particularly as local authorities will almost certainly have in place, as we do person specification requirements regarding communication skills;
- remedial action where workers do not meet the required level of fluency which follows good practice and established case law.
- the complaints procedure that must be followed in respect of a complaint made by members of the public under the fluency duty;
- guidance on compliance which references the Equality Act 2010 and specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty.

15. Our initial assessment is that there will be little impact on our own employees and recruitment practice but a more detailed consideration of the implications is underway. A separate review of the City Corporation's customer complaints procedure for members of the public will also need to be undertaken to consider the implications of the duty.

### **Gender Pay Gap**

16. The Regulations relating to public bodies is expected in the new year capturing data from 1 April 2017. We are intending to undertake a trial report at the end of the financial year which will help to identify and address any issues in reporting.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Equality and Inclusion Action Plan 2016

### **Background Papers**

Code of Practice on the English language requirements for public sector workers

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