Committee(s): EDI Sub-committee – For Information	Dated 7th March 2023
Subject: Staff Networks update report	**Public**
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,5, 8
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	**N**
If so, how much?	**N/A**
What is the source of Funding?	**N/A**
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	**N/A**
Report of: Emma Moore, Chief Operating Officer **Report author: Micah McLean, EDI Officer**	For Information

Summary

In September 2022, following focus groups conducted at the National Inclusion Week Celebration Event held at Guildhall Art Gallery, the EDI Directorate started a project focused upon strengthening staff networks and improving employee voice mechanisms at the City Corporation.

During the 2022/2023 annual year the EDI Directorate launched several initiatives to support staff network co-chairs and leads. This included more frequent EDI board meetings, notification of 3.5 hours a week facilities time for each co-chair, network maturity assessments, increasing visibility of staff networks via a hybrid event, LinkedIN posts and intranet updates.

Staff have responded well to the strategy the EDI Directorate has delivered with regards to staff networks and staff engagement. Recently, following a survey conducted after the EDI Staff Network Live Broadcast Event (in which 20% of attendees responded) 93% of staff reported were either satisfied or very satisfied with the speakers on the day, 65% with the location, 72% with the presentations and, 71% with the date and time respectively.

The EDI Directorate in summary has made significant headway with regards to staff networks and improving the employee voice systems within the City Corporation and aims to deliver more tangible outcomes for staff in the years to come.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note:

- Achievements of the EDI Directorate in relation to staff networks over the last six months

Main Report

Background

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the four main aims that can be achieved by a staff network are as follows:
- Provide a safe space for discussion of issues related to protected groups;
- Help to raise awareness of issues within the wider organisation;
- Provide a source of support for employees who may be facing challenges at work; and
- Offer a collective voice for the workforce to management.

 (CIPD, A guide to establishing staff networks, 2021)

Strengthening Staff Networks

1. The City of London Corporation currently has 7 staff networks. These are the Women's , Multi-faith, Clear, Yen, City Pride, Carers & Parents and the DAWN networks. In line with best practice and an analytical approach to assessing the CoLC staff survey results, the EDI Directorate identified quickly the importance of strengthening staff networks and improving employee voice mechanisms at the City Corporation.

2. This started with a National Inclusion Week Celebration Event which place in September 2022 in which 56 people attended from CoLC departments and Institutions. The event provided an opportunity for staff network co-chairs and leads to highlight their achievements over the last 12 months.

3. In addition, focus groups were conducted with all staff present at the event to identify the key challenges facing staff networks and employee voice mechanisms at the City of London Corporation. **(Appendix 1)**

4. The results of the focus groups enabled the EDI Directorate to collect data that ultimately informed the approach that would be taken to strengthen staff networks.

Increasing visibility

5. One of the key themes that arose from the focus groups surrounded raising awareness of the events that staff networks are hosting.

6. Events such as Purple Tuesday (DAWN), The Lord Mayor's Show City Pride Float March (City Pride), Launch of Young Employees Network (YEN), and Black History Month Events (CLEAR) were supported by the EDI Directorate who were in attendance and supported the event.

7. The EDI Directorate supported City Pride members by decorating their float a month before The Lord Mayors Show. City Pride's float attracted national attention and was covered by Newspapers including the [Daily Mail](#) and [Eastern Daily Press](#) in a positive light.

EDI Board

8. Since September 2022, the EDI Team has organised and provided admin support to the EDI board meetings which take place every six weeks.

9. The EDI board provides staff network co-chairs, leads and sponsors with an opportunity to discuss their various workstreams and scrutinise proposed initiatives that could have an impact on network members or those within their protected groups.

10. Consequently, the EDI Board has enabled the EDI Directorate to build positive relationships with all seven staff networks. The EDI board meetings have been well attended.

Staff Network Handbook and Terms of Reference

11. To ensure that staff network co-chairs, leads and sponsors can attract new volunteers, the EDI Directorate updated their staff network handbook and terms of reference in 2022.

12. These guidance documents were updated and refined through cross-collaboration with all seven staff networks (which was emphasised as highly important during the focus group) and are available on the intranet pages.

Radius Training/Network Maturity Report

13. Another key area for improvement that staff network co-chairs, leads and sponsors highlighted was leadership commitment to making EDI a priority by providing additional funds and resources.

14. In March 2022, Radius was commissioned to deliver training to staff network co-chairs, leads and sponsors and currently 7 colleagues volunteering in these roles have enrolled onto the course.

15. In December 2022, six of the seven staff networks completed the Radius Network Maturity Form which fed into the Network Maturity Report that was presented to co-chairs on 18th December.

16. The staff networks have since been provided with the Radius Staff Network Maturity Model which they can use to measure their progress in the following areas:
    - Agility, Innovation and Nudges
    - Authenticity and Business ethics
    - Brand and Identity
    - Communications
    - Leadership and Legacy
    - Network influence and Inclusive Behaviours
    - Sponsors and Stakeholders
    - Strategy and Influencing Change

17. This framework can be used by the staff networks to measure their progress in these areas over time. The framework can also help staff networks to focus on specific areas that they chose to work on.

Communications

18. Feedback from the focus group emphasised that significant work needed to be done to highlight the events that staff networks were delivering throughout the annual year.

19. The EDI Directorate has built an effective working relationship with internal communications team. Internal comms have set up pages dedicated to each of the seven staff networks and EDI related events. In addition, the internal comms team have provided additional support by promoting events on the main page of the intranet.

20. On 21st February, the EDI Directorate held its first staff network live broadcast in which 83 colleagues attended. Following the feedback from the staff satisfaction survey that was sent to all attendees of the event (20% completion rate) 71% were very satisfied or satisfied with the date and time of the event, 73% with the location and format, 93 % with the speakers and 77% with the presentations that were delivered on the day. **(Appendix 2)**

21. The biggest challenge facing all the staff networks is that they are currently unable to make use of their facilities time. Most chairs are unable to take time off their substantive roles due to ongoing challenges with recruitment across various teams and departments.

Future Aspirations

22. We would like the City of London Corporation to be an employer of choice and one of the UK's best employers. The benefits of being an employer of choice and a top 100 employer is that it would enable the City Corporation to attract the best global talent in line with the vision set out in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018 to 2023.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

This report is aligned with outcomes 1, 2 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the Corporate Plan 2018 to 2023. It is also aligned with the CoLC's Social Mobility Strategy 2018 to 2028 and other Strategic Plans.

Resource implications –The project led by the EDI directorate is cross-cutting and it will have resource implications for all CoLC departments, services and institutions. Consequently, each department and institution should consider the human and financial resources required to achieve the Equality Objectives of the CoLC and to comply with the CoLC obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and related regulations.

Legal implications –   This report will enable the CoLC to comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and specific duties under the Act.

Risk implications – The risk of non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and related regulations include reputational damage and the possibility of the proceedings being brought by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

Equalities implications – This report will enable the CoLC to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, Section 149 which covers the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Specific Duties regulations mentioned above.

Climate implications – N/A

Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

23. To conclude, significant work has taken place to strengthen staff networks following feedback from the National Inclusion Week Celebration Event in September 2022. As a result, staff networks have responded well to all the initiatives, guidance documents, events and mini projects delivered by the EDI directorate.

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Appendix 1 – National Inclusion Celebration Week Focus Group Results

EDI Focus Groups – National Inclusion Week Celebration Event

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Directorate – October 2022

Facilitators
Ms. Saida Bello, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Alec Childs, HR Business Partner
Micah Mclean, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Stuart, Carruthers, Learning and Development Trainer

City Corporation Vision

Our Vision

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK.

City Corporation Corporate Plan 2018 to 2023

*The **Corporate Plan** sets the vision & direction for the City Corporation, providing a 'golden thread' for all we do:*

Contribute to a Flourishing Society
People have good health and wellbeing, equal opportunities to enrich their lives/reach their potential and feel safe in cohesive communities that have the facilities they need.

Shape Outstanding Environments
Clean air, land and water, sustainable natural environment and spaces that are secure and well maintained. Inspiring enterprise and are digitally and physically well connected.

Support a Thriving Economy
The best legal and regulatory framework, a global hub for innovation, businesses are trusted and socially responsible and can access skilled and talented people.

What we will cover

This presentation will cover all the results from focus group session that took place on from **Tuesday 27th September 2022**. 38 participants attended this session.

Focus Group Questions 1-7

1. Staff Survey – What actions could we take?

2. How Can Senior Leaders Help?

3. Staff Networks: What is going well?

4. How can we support our staff networks?

5. EDI Workstreams what could we add?

6. Allyship – How can we develop an allies' network?

7.   Staff networks what we could improve ?

Question 1: Staff Survey – What actions could we take?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Questions Design
1. Asking more leading questions
2. Discuss questions with Senior Leadership Team (SLTs) as they are happy to provide input

Time Management
1. Providing staff with time during the working day to complete the survey

Survey Design
1. Tailor of the design of the survey according to each department as each division faces different challenges

Vision
1.Clarity around the Corporations aims, goals – What do we want to achieve?

Question 2: How Can Senior Leaders Help?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Supporting Staff
1. Sustain support and skills share
2. Empower middle managers to encourage teams
3. Minimum of at least one SLT member to be on a staff network
4. Buy-in to corporate narrative and support
5. Donation of time across SLT to staff networks, not just the network sponsors

Equality and Inclusion (E&I)
1. Make E&I a priority with resources and money
2. Mandatory E&I targets for directorates e.g. engagement events
3. EDI Champion per area/departments

Career Development
1. Reverse mentoring
2. Career progression
3. Mentoring

Safe Spaces
1. Share experiences across the Corporation

Budget
1. Increase budget to include at least one quality speaker

Leading by Example
1. Role Modelling

Question 3: Staff Networks: What is going well?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Activities and Events
1. A lot of activity within the networks
2. Connections between staff networks
3. All staff networks have lots of events but publicising these further would be useful

Networking
1. Opportunities to meet new people
2. Building relationships beyond Guildhall

Events
1. Events like this which are new.
2. In – person events are being organised again

Question 4: How can we support our staff networks?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Budget
1. Dedicated budget

Supporting Events
1. By attending events
2. Spreading the word surrounding events
3. Intersectional events

Recruitment
1. Encouraging more employees to become members of staff networks
2. Space to incorporate the buy-in value of staff networks into job descriptions

Time Management
1. Give more time to leads to work on developing the networks

Communication
1. Improvement in communication between networks
2. Meetings between network chairs.
3. Provide time for employee engagement

Policy Development
1. Empowering networks to have a consultant/advisory role in policy change

Supporting Actions and Plans of Staff Networks
1. Actively support actions and plans of staff networks corporately

Question 6: Allyship – How can we develop an allies' network?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Schemes/Programmes
1. Buddy or advocate scheme.
2. Allies' programme exists in the City of London Policy – please link in!

Education
1. Education for those who wish to be allies.
2. Understanding the issues experienced by staff from protected groups through listening exercises focused on learning about their lived experiences.

Question 7: Allyship –Staff networks what we could improve ?

Concerning this question staff provided a number of answers which have been organised under the following headings:

Voting
1. Regular polling

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
1. Attendance of SLTs to staff network events

Visibility
1. To be more visible to people who are not part of the networks

Interactive working
1. Keep Camera on during Microsoft Teams meetings to be more involved.
2. Record sessions for those who may not always be able to attend i.e., shift workers

Inclusion

1. Ensuring that non – members know they can attend events for information/education

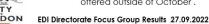2. Making sure people have the opportunity to interact with staff networks in person or online

Research

1. Asking staff, they want or need from staff networks.

Collaborative Working

1. Networks coming together more and delivering collaborative projects, sessions etc.

2. Cross – collaboration between staff networks for support.

Events

1. Continued support around the whole year e.g., Black History Months, including what events & support will be offered outside of October .

Appendix 2 – EDI Live Broadcast Results (collected through Microsoft Forms)

2. Please rate your satisfaction level with the following aspects of the event

   More Details

   ■ Extremely satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Not satisfied ■ Very unsatisfied ■ Unsatisfied