

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee:</b> Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Sub Committee – <i>For information and endorsement</i>	<b>Dated:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Subject:</b> Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Review Update	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> </ul>	Equalities underpin all Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes Equality Objectives 2024-29 People Strategy 2024-29
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	Yes
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£20,000
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	Funding met through 23-24 contingency
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Dionne Corradine, Chief Strategy Officer
<b>Report author:</b>	Sacha Than, EDI Governance Lead, Corporate Strategy and Performance

### Summary

At the December 2023 meeting of the EDI Sub Committee, Members agreed four priority actions to ensure the City Corporation was compliant in its Equality duties, one of which was the need for an independent review of the City Corporation’s Equity, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) provision. Significant work took place in 2024 to stabilise the EEDI function including the recruitment of an Equalities Director, following which the EEDI Review could be commissioned. The Terms of Reference were submitted to the September meeting of the EDI Sub Committee and following a full tender exercise, Belonging Pioneers were appointed to undertake this work starting in November 2024.

The Review is currently in progress and will finish on 1 April 2025. This activity will enable us as an organisation to understand and baseline the current position in relation to EEDI. Data gathering exercises have been taking place since November 2024. After which, Belonging Pioneers will begin preparing their final products, including a report of findings and recommendations. It is proposed that the suite of final products be taken through officer governance channels to create a workplan

and timelines for implementation. All of this will be brought to the June EDI Sub Committee for Member feedback and approval.

With the next meeting of the EDI Sub Committee taking place on 16 June, Belonging Pioneers have been asked to prepare a presentation for the February meeting of the EDI Sub Committee with their baseline assessment, findings to date and emerging headlines and themes for your consideration and discussion.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- note the report;
- consider and comment on the baseline assessment and initial findings presentation provided by Belonging Pioneers at the February EDI Sub Committee meeting; and
- endorse the proposal that the final report with recommendations and options for next steps be brought to the June EDI Sub Committee meeting for decision.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. In a confidential session at the December 2023 EDI Sub Committee, Members agreed to address the immediate challenges for the EEDI function through four priority areas:
  - a. Support to the EEDI Team
  - b. Ensure the Corporation is compliant in its equality duties and commitments
  - c. Take stock of and prioritise three political EEDI commitments (the Equality Objectives, Tackling Racism Taskforce recommendations, and address EEDI data gaps
  - d. Scope and agree the Terms of Reference with Members for an EEDI Review to take place and conclude by April 2025
2. Four stages were identified to establish key infrastructure for the Corporation's EEDI ambitions with associated workstreams. These are spread over a five-year period, from 2024-2029 aligned to aid delivery of the Corporate Plan, People Strategy and Equality Objectives all running during the same period. We are currently in the first stage, with the EEDI Team working with others to stabilise the function. The four stages are:
  - a. Stabilise
  - b. Strengthen
  - c. Sustain
  - d. Soar

3. Since November 2023, work has taken place at pace to stabilise the EEDI function. However, there is still a significant amount of work to fully realise ambitions. The initial phase has already made significant progress, including achieving compliance with the Equality Act 2010, mapping the EEDI officer governance function to identify key stakeholders and streamline collaboration, and achieving a respectable result in this year's Social Mobility Employer Index (a jump of 29 places – from 87 to 58).
4. At the September 2024 meeting of the EDI Sub Committee, Members endorsed the EEDI Review's Terms of Reference which provided:
  - a. Confirmation of scope
  - b. Inputs to inform and shape the Review
  - c. An outline of outputs upon completion
5. Members were informed at the November EDI Sub Committee meeting of the full tender exercise carried out across September and October to appoint consultants to lead the Review. Belonging Pioneers, a SME, ethnic minority, female owned business met all our requirements on responsible procurement and performed strongly across the technical exercises. Clearly setting out how they would enable us to baseline and probe our current and future ambitions in the EEDI space internally and externally. The contract was awarded to Belonging Pioneers to undertake the Review from 5 November 2024 until 1 April 2025.

### **Current Position**

6. To deliver this work within the timescales and budget, the Review has been conducted through the following approaches, as outlined to Members at the November EDI Sub Committee. Each stage has been led by Belonging Pioneers in close collaboration with and support from the EEDI Team and remains on track for completion in April. Detail on this approach and engagement is below:

November 2024	Document review to capture the starting state and aspirations
December 2024	Survey to all staff and Members
December 2024	Interviews with key stakeholders
January 2025	Listening circle to better understand what works/could be better with respect to EEDI
February 2025	Workshop to synthesise findings from the work thus far into tangible outcomes
February 2025	Emerging headlines and themes to be shared with the Steering Group and Senior Leadership Team
February EDI Sub Committee Meeting	Baseline assessment presentation
March 2025	Draft report for consultation with Steering Group and presentation to EEDI Forum
April 2025	Final report of findings and recommendations

## **Document Review**

7. Staff Network Co-Chairs and departmental and Institution EEDI Leads were invited to contribute to the document review. An online hub was created by City Corporation's IT team for Belonging Pioneers to synthesise and close to 200 inputs were shared on this site which were both internal staff focussed and external service user related covering systems, governance, services, measurements, insights, resources, and processes.

## **Survey**

8. A survey, open to all staff and Members of the Court of Common Council, was launched in early December and ran for three weeks. Designed by Belonging Pioneers, with some minor customisation to align with the organisation's culture, operational context and language. This survey measured different aspects of the City Corporation's culture, inclusivity, and employee and Member experience. The survey covered key areas such as identity, career trajectory, organisational, managerial, collegial relationships and enquired into individual, institutional and structural factors. These insights will provide a holistic view of the City Corporation's current environment and identify areas for improvement.
9. We received 850 responses to the survey. The results of which are currently being analysed by Belonging Pioneers. Whilst the majority of City Corporation departments provided enough data for meaningful analysis to take place. There has been a very low response rate for some but not all the Institutions<sup>1</sup>, those that have a return of 3% and under cannot be included in the detailed breakdowns which will be shared during the presentation at Committee.
10. The return for the Court of Common Council stands at 48% with 60 Members having submitted a response.

## **Stakeholder engagement meetings**

11. At the time of writing this report, this phase is still in progress with 70 people identified to join the different sessions<sup>2</sup>. The following groups were invited to participate in either the interviews, listening circle, or workshop.
  - EDI Sub Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, Chief Commoner
  - Staff Network Co-Chairs
  - Staff Network Sponsors

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<sup>1</sup> We are working with the Institutions to understand why there have been low response rates e.g. similar surveys being run in tandem, so that this can be reflected in the Review's findings and recommendations. We are intending to gain additional insights from those areas through a range of alternative methods e.g. other surveys conducted, consultation e.g. CoLP EDI Strategy has been included in the document review, people survey results in those areas with low completion. The Institutions are being included in the Stakeholder Engagement sessions with interviews being offered and participation in the Workshop.

<sup>2</sup> Representatives from each Institution have been invited to participate in the stakeholder engagement sessions to ensure their views are captured.

- Senior Leadership Team
- EEDI Leads from every department and Institution
- Trade Union Representatives from Unite and GMB
- City Belonging Team
- EEDI Review Steering Group

12. A meeting with the EEDI Review's Steering Group has been convened for early February to discuss emerging headlines and themes for the Review and to gain the group's insights on identified priorities, challenges, and next steps. A similar presentation has been arranged with the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Final products**

13. To meet the tight timelines of the Review, it was agreed to phase the work. Phase 1 is funded to and concludes on 1 April, as part of this stage, the following products will be provided:

- a) a report of findings with insights and recommendations to drive positive change (including physical, environmental, and cultural)
- b) a list of priorities and initial recommendations for moving forward
- c) a documented toolkit for tracking readiness and progress towards achieving Brilliant Basics and progressing on the journey towards World Class

14. In line with the Terms of Reference, a meeting of the EEDI Forum has been convened for Belonging Pioneers to present their findings and gain any final insights from staff before finalising their products and recommendations.

### **Proposals**

15. With the final products available from the first week of April. It is proposed that the EEDI Team in collaboration with Executive Leadership Board and other key stakeholders work through the information provided by Belonging Pioneers with a full report, a workplan, and associated timelines be brought to the next meeting of the EDI Sub Committee for Member decision on what the next phase should entail and what should be prioritised to support the implementation of recommended changes. This approach will provide the recently appointed Equalities Director the opportunity to review the recommendations and align them with their vision for the function.

### **Key Data**

16. Data gathering has been critical to the effective delivery of this work. This has been achieved through the document review, survey, and interviews. Data validation, alignment, testing assumptions and next steps will be completed through the listening circle, workshop, and meeting with the Steering Group. We have also asked Belonging Pioneers to consider any benchmarking or good practise examples that may inform their recommendations.

17. The data collection exercises have been enabling Belonging Pioneers to:

- successfully understand the City Corporation
- gain the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders
- identify gaps and risks
- identify areas of commonality and difference
- create opportunities for engagement
- and ultimately make recommendations as to how to embed EEDI throughout the culture of the City Corporation

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

Strategic implications – The approach and focus are to better understand, grip and address strategic EEDI priorities now and in the future with particular emphasis on delivering the Equality Objectives 2024-2029, Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and People Strategy 2024-2029.

Financial implications – Funding is required to carry out this activity. The ask was cognisant of the financial challenges facing the Corporation, balanced with delivering the political EEDI priorities and meeting our statutory obligations. Work took place with Chamberlains to review the policy budget, and funds of £20,000 were agreed. This budget of £20,000 has been agreed with Belonging Pioneers for work to 1 April 2025. Any additional resource and financial considerations will be discussed with Members and Chief Officers (including the Chamberlain) if required<sup>3</sup>. The work remains on track to be carried out within the agreed budget.

Resource implications – The resourcing of the work outlined is being carried out by consultants with support from officers within the EEDI Team and wider Chief Strategy Officer Portfolio. Input from EEDI Officer governance through the EEDI Forum and other staff groups, as applicable e.g. corporate enablers and staff networks is being sought.

Legal implications – A representative from the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department is on the steering group to ensure that the Review has due regard to the City Corporation's obligations in its role as a local, port and police authority.

Risk implications – The Review seeks to minimise negative impacts, identify and exploit opportunities and mitigate risks for City Corporation in relation to EEDI. It will strengthen our evidence base of strategic EEDI risks and inform associated mitigation measures.

Equalities implications – The work taking place seeks to improve and enhance City Corporation's EEDI offer. It is anticipated that the findings from the Review will help move us from basic compliance to achieving brilliant basics and ultimately becoming world class. This will help reduce inequalities in our internal and external EEDI operations and offerings.

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<sup>3</sup> 1 This is separate to the FY23/24 and FY24/25 agreed with Chamberlains related to the investment required to fund transformation of the Corporate EEDI Team.

Climate implications – none

Security implications – Ensuring City Corporation remains safe and secure from an EEDI perspective is one of the driving forces behind the work detailed throughout this report.

## **Conclusion**

18. The EEDI Review is in on track to be completed within the agreed timescales and budget. Belonging Pioneers will provide a baseline assessment with emerging themes and headlines to Members at the February EDI Sub Committee. The data gathering exercises will conclude in early February, after which a final report setting out the baseline assessment, recommendations to drive change, and a documented toolkit for tracking readiness and progress towards achieving our EEDI goals will be produced for 1 April. This information will be reviewed by the EEDI Team and key City Corporation stakeholders with recommended next steps to be brought to the June meeting of the EDI Sub Committee for decision.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – EEDI Review – Terms of Reference

## **Background Papers**

EEDI Work and Priorities – 26 June 2024 report to EDI Sub Committee [Committee Report Template \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

EEDI Review – Terms of Reference, 4 September 2024 report to EDI Sub Committee [Committee Report Template](#)

EEDI Review Update – 22 November 2024 [Report - EEDI Review Update.pdf](#)

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