

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee:</b> Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Sub Committee – For information	<b>Dated:</b> 16/06/2025
<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, Head of CSO Policy and Projects, Corporate Strategy and Performance

## Summary

This report provides an update on the completion of the Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Review, commissioned to assess the City of London Corporation's current position and future ambitions in the EEDI space. The Review was delivered by Belonging Pioneers between November 2024 and April 2025, following endorsement of the Terms of Reference by the EDI Sub Committee in September 2024.

The Review was structured around a phased methodology including document analysis, a staff and Member survey, stakeholder interviews, a listening circle<sup>1</sup>, and a synthesis workshop. Belonging Pioneers used the evidence gathered from these interventions to identify key themes, gaps, and opportunities for embedding EEDI across the City Corporation mapping these against a maturity framework.

The final products comprise of eleven documents totalling 500 pages, including a 38-page summary report, a 113-page report with annexes, two standalone annexes

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<sup>1</sup> A facilitated process to provide individuals an opportunity to share their perspective, to experience and give the experience of empathy and compassion of listening, and to contribute to a collective voice for developing positive solutions.

(Annex B and Annex I), two draft foundational toolkits, and four supporting spreadsheets with a guide to navigate them. These outputs collectively offer a baseline assessment, a suite of recommendations, and practical tools to support implementation and progress tracking.

The EEDI Team is currently reviewing these materials to extract actionable insights and align them with organisational priorities. The findings and recommendations provide a robust foundation for the next phase of strategic development. As the Review and associated findings cover a snapshot in time, a programme of engagement with colleagues including departmental and Institution EEDI Leads will take place to contextualise, fact-check and test relevance on any recommendations that are taken forward based on evidence gathered from the Review.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- note the final products;
- note the proposal to use the Review's findings as an input into the creation of a cross-Corporation strategic framework for EEDI<sup>2</sup>; and
- participate in a discussion on next steps facilitated by the Equalities Director

## **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 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

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<sup>2</sup> As part of the EEDI Review document review, other EEDI related reviews were considered and therefore, a cross-Corporation strategic framework will be cognisant of work either completed or ongoing elsewhere across the City of London Corporation including the Institutions and with our partner organisations.

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<sup>3</sup>. The initial phase in 2024 made significant progress, including achieving compliance with the Equality Act 2010, mapping the EEDI officer governance function to identify key stakeholders and streamline collaboration, achieving a respectable result in this year's Social Mobility Employer Index (a jump of 29 places – from 87 to 58), and strengthening the team through recruitment of key roles including the Equalities Director.
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 Small and Medium sized Enterprise (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.
6. To deliver this work within the timescales and budget, the Review was conducted through data gathering exercises, set out in the table below. Each stage was led by Belonging Pioneers and project managed by the EEDI Team.

November 2024	Document review to capture the starting state and aspirations
December 2024	Survey open 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

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<sup>3</sup> The Equalities Director has provided a report to the June EDI Sub Committee setting out in detail the work to date and proposed next steps for the function.

## **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. 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 with 850 responses received. The return for the Court of Common Council stood at 48% with 60 Members submitting a response.
9. Designed by Belonging Pioneers, with some minor customisation to align with the organisation's culture, operational context and language. The 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.

## **Stakeholder engagement meetings**

10. Several stakeholder engagement sessions took place in the form of interviews<sup>4</sup>, listening circle, and a workshop, 70 people from the following groups were invited to participate in these sessions<sup>5</sup>:

- EDI Sub Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, Chief Commoner
- EEDI Review Steering Group
- City of London Corporation Senior Leadership Team & Executive Leadership Board
- Staff Network Co-Chairs
- Staff Network Sponsors
- EEDI Leads from every department and Institution
- Trade Union Representatives from Unite and GMB
- City Belonging Team

11. Across February and March 2025, Belonging Pioneers presented emerging headlines and themes to the EDI Sub Committee, EEDI Review's Steering Group, the City of London Corporation's Senior Leadership Team, and the EEDI Forum. This provided an opportunity for Belonging Pioneers to gain insights on

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<sup>4</sup> The interviews were both internal staff and external service user related with participants chosen to provide a view on both elements.

<sup>5</sup> Representatives from each Institution were invited to participate in the stakeholder engagement sessions to ensure their views were captured.

identified priorities, challenges, and next steps before creating their final products.

## **Current Position**

### **Final products**

12. To meet the tight timelines of the Review, it was agreed to phase the work. Phase 1 was funded to and concluded in April. The Review's Terms of Reference asked that the following products be provided upon conclusion of the Review:
  - 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
13. On completion of the Review, Belonging Pioneers provided the following eleven documents:
  - 38-page summary report of findings and recommendations
  - 113-page report of findings and recommendations with 7 annexes
  - A separate 163-page annex detailing pockets of good practice and detailed recommendations entitled Annex B
  - A separate 108-page annex detailing the document analysis entitled Annex I
  - Foundational EEDI Toolkit for practitioners
  - Foundational EEDI Toolkit for the City of London Corporation
  - Guide to navigating the spreadsheets
  - Spreadsheet 1: City of London Corporation Department Institutions EEDI Lens
  - Spreadsheet 2: EEDI Alignment to City of London Corporation Strategic Plan
  - Spreadsheet 3: Workshop Brown Paper Content
  - Spreadsheet 4: The Narrative Positioning with Key Themes aligned to the DEIB Framework
14. The 38-page report of findings and recommendations is appended to this report as Appendix 2. The additional documents are to be taken in closed session and can be found in the Non-Public section of the agenda<sup>6</sup>.
15. The EEDI Review identified eight overarching recommendations and over 150 possible initiatives that will need to be reviewed and prioritised. Since receipt of the final products, the EEDI Team have been working through the documents to review the findings and draw out the initiatives.

## **Proposals**

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<sup>6</sup> These documents are to be considered in closed session due to the sensitive information they contain relating to business and financial affairs.

16. The Equalities Director is in the process of developing a strategic framework for EEDI for the City of London Corporation grounded in best practice. It is proposed that the findings from the EEDI Review will serve as one of several key inputs into the development of this framework.
17. As this work is still in its early stages, the Equalities Director will facilitate a discussion during the Non-Public session of the June meeting of the EDI Sub-Committee. Members will be invited to explore key themes in greater depth, helping to ensure that the development of the framework draws out the relevant nuance for the City Corporation and the subsequent prioritisation and sequencing focuses on the most relevant and impactful areas.
18. The discussion at this initial meeting will play a formative role in steering the priorities for the EEDI strategic framework. Insights and priorities shared by Members will support the direction of travel and content of the framework as it is worked up. Following this, the draft framework will be progressed through officer governance channels and wider stakeholder engagement, before being brought back to Members in September for formal consideration and decision.

## **Key Data**

19. Data gathering was critical for effective delivery of the EEDI Review. The approach taken has been outlined in paragraphs 6-11 of this report. Data validation, alignment, testing assumptions and next steps were completed through the listening circle, workshop, and meetings with the Steering Group, Senior Leadership Team, and February meeting of the EDI Sub Committee.
20. However, the Review and associated findings cover a snapshot in time. Therefore, a programme of engagement with colleagues including departmental and Institution EEDI Leads will take place to contextualise, fact-check, and test relevance on any recommendations that are taken forward based on evidence gathered from the Review.

## **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 was required to carry out the Review. 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 was agreed with Belonging Pioneers for work to 1 April 2025. No additional resource or financial considerations were required. The next steps will be carried out by officers within the EEDI Team and wider Chief Strategy Officer Portfolio.

Resource implications – The Review was 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 groups, as applicable e.g. corporate enablers, Trade Union Reps, and Staff Networks was sought. The next steps will be resourced from the existing EEDI and wider CSO Portfolio with corporate enablers asked to input where appropriate.

Legal implications – Where advice is needed for legal implications, this will be sought from the Comptrollers and City Solicitors Department.

Risk implications – The Review's findings seek to minimise negative impacts, identify and exploit opportunities and mitigate risks for City Corporation in relation to EEDI. Its input into a framework 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. The findings from the Review will help move us from basic compliance to achieving brilliant basics and ultimately into becoming world class. This will help reduce inequalities in our internal and external EEDI operations and offerings.

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**

21. The EEDI Review has been delivered to budget, providing a foundational baseline for the next phase of strategic development. The Equalities Director is now leading the development of a strategic framework for EEDI, for which the Review's findings will serve as a key input.
22. The facilitated discussion at the June EDI Sub Committee will be a useful enabler in the development of the framework's direction, ensuring it reflects the City Corporation's values and addresses key themes. Through this collaborative approach, and with continued engagement from stakeholders across the organisation, the City Corporation aims to move from brilliant basics to world class. The framework will be further developed through officer governance channels and stakeholder engagement, with a draft version to be brought back to Members in September 2025 for formal consideration and decision.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – EEDI Review – Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 – 38-page summary report of findings and recommendations

## Background Papers

EEDI Work and Priorities – 26 June 2024 report to EDI Sub Committee [Report - EEDI Work and Priorities](#)

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

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

EEDI Review Update – 5 February 2025 [Report - EEDI Review.pdf](#)

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