

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Metro Mayor and Members of the
Combined Authority

Meeting: 21 January 2022

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

KEY DECISION Yes

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR POLICY REFORM AND RESOURCES

EQUALITY STRATEGY DRAFT VISION AND OBJECTIVES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report sets out the approach to developing a four-year equality strategy for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The strategy will set out the vision and objectives for equality, diversity and inclusion and demonstrate how the ambition set out within the corporate plan in relation to equalities will be achieved.
- 1.2. The strategy will be underpinned by a delivery plan and performance will be reviewed regularly and reported to the Combined Authority. The draft vision and objectives are set out in this report for consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:
 - (a) notes the draft equality vision and objectives provided at Appendix 1 and the approach to developing the Equality Strategy.
 - (b) agrees to the inclusion of socio-economic status as part of the equality strategy as described at paragraph 3.2.
 - (c) notes that the Combined Authority Equality Strategy will be presented to the Combined Authority in March 2022.
 - (d) Approves the short-term supporting actions detailed at 3.4 below.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Combined Authority agreed a three-year Corporate Plan in July 2021, which established a vision for a fairer, stronger, cleaner City Region where no one is left behind. The plan outlines five priorities to achieve this vision and three crosscutting themes of recovery, equality and sustainability embedded across each priority.



- 3.2 The plan sets out a commitment to develop a strategy which ensures we promote equality and diversity across the Liverpool City Region and play a leading role as an employer and commissioner of services to improve equality of outcomes across all protected characteristics. Under the Equality Act 2010 there is also a requirement for LCRCA to publish equality objectives at least every four years.
- 3.3 The protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are race, religion, disability, age, LGBTQ+, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, sex, and pregnancy and maternity. The Social Mobility Commission recommended to Government legislating so that socio-economic status is also treated as a protected characteristic¹, and it is requested that the Combined Authority agrees to proceed on this basis.
- 3.4 The vision and objectives, for consideration, are set out at Appendix 1. They have been developed based on engagement and consultation as summarised below and detailed at Appendix 2. The approach is aligned with the Race Equality Declaration of Intent and sets out the ambitions and objectives for the protected characteristics across the Combined Authority's roles as an employer, as a commissioner (which also encompasses public service provider and investor), and as a regional civic leader.

¹ [Navigating the Labyrinth](#), May 2021

3.5 While developing the strategy, officers will continue to progress the following, subject to approval by members:

- Implement the Race Equality Programme as agreed by the Combined Authority and use best practice and learning to inform the development of programme activity across all protected characteristics.
- Further enhance monitoring, analysis and reporting of equality data and embed this into systems and processes.
- Publish additional information, including evidence of monitoring data, on the Combined Authority website.
- Continue to develop capability to carry out and act upon quality Equality Impact Assessment's (EIA's) and embed into key business planning and decision-making processes, ensuring publication as appropriate.
- Review the equalities infrastructure and engagement forums to identify opportunities for strengthening their support of delivery;
- In collaboration with local authorities, establish employee network groups for disabled and LGBTQ+ employees; review other employee networks and their relationship with wider equalities infrastructure.
- Collect and report on existing advisory board member equality data;
- Embed equality objectives across all Combined Authority portfolios to ensure delivery of the corporate plan equalities crosscutting theme.

Consultation and engagement

3.6 The emerging themes from consultation on the draft equalities vision and objectives are provided at Appendix 2, alongside details of the external engagement undertaken. This work builds on the consultation and engagement already undertaken in developing the Combined Authority's Race Equality Declaration of Intent.

3.7 The approach to engagement has captured views from residents of all six local authority areas and across all protected characteristics and socio-economic status. To date this engagement has focused on strategic level ambitions with further engagement and consultation planned to inform the specific actions and success measures that will be detailed in the delivery plans.

3.8 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the approach to developing the Equality Strategy, the external engagement and the feedback received at their meeting on 3 November 2021. The Committee will also be asked to consider a draft of the equality strategy vision and objectives and associated delivery plan.

- 3.9 The Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board has been engaged and similarly will be invited to continue to input into the development of the equality strategy and delivery plans.
- 3.10 On agreement of the Combined Authority of the draft vision and strategic objectives, further engagement and consultation will take place to develop the draft strategy and delivery plan in collaboration with local authorities, partners and wider stakeholders.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

Combined Authority resources have been identified to develop the equality strategy with £80k from the 2021/22 budget year to develop and implement the strategy in terms of interim support, training, and commissioning. Resources to support the ongoing delivery of the strategy have been requested through the budget setting process and are therefore subject to member approval.

4.2 Human Resources

Senior level interim capacity has been recruited to provide a 6-month period of support to the process of further embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and, subject to approval of the budget growth item referenced at 4.1 above, a permanent Lead Officer role will be recruited.

4.3 Physical Assets

There are no physical assets issues arising directly from this report.

4.4 Information Technology

There are no IT issues arising directly from this report.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In common with other public authorities, the Combined Authority has a general and a specific duty under the Equality Act 2010. The development of the Equality Strategy and the consequent work to deliver against the objectives detailed therein will support the Combined Authority to be compliant with these duties.

6 RISKS AND MITIGATION

- 6.1 There are clear legal, reputational, performance, and political risks in not adequately addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). These risks are being mitigated through:

- Senior leadership of the equalities agenda by the Executive Director for Corporate Development and Delivery
- Prioritising and resourcing the development of the Equality Strategy
- Taking forward a work programme under the equalities, diversity and inclusion portfolio, led by Mayor Joanne Anderson, which includes embedding equality objectives across each portfolio.

A risk register is in place and will be monitored as part of the Developing our Organisation programme outlined within the Corporate Plan.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.2 The Combined Authority's Equality Strategy will be a key tool to delivering the commitment to EDI, as detailed within the Corporate Plan. As such the Equality Strategy should ensure that the interests of people with 'protected characteristics' are advanced across the Liverpool City Region.

8 PRIVACY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Although there are no privacy implications arising directly from this report, it is recognised that good quality data will be central to delivery of the Equality Strategy, and this has already been identified as an area in need of improvement. It will therefore be vital to ensure a high level of confidence in the Combined Authority's collection and use of data amongst employees, the public, and partner organisations, through careful adherence to General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

9 COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- 9.1 The final version of the Equality Strategy vision and objectives, and in due course the related delivery plan, will be published on the Combined Authority's website and shared directly with key partners. A communications plan will be developed to ensure activities within the strategy are communicated to residents, partners and stakeholders.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The importance of equality, diversity and inclusion is set out in the Combined Authority's three-year Corporate Plan and our vision for a City Region where no one is left behind. This report provides the draft vision and objectives for the equalities strategy which will formally embed and deliver our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

LIZ DEAN

Executive Director Corporate Development and Delivery

METRO MAYOR S ROTHERAM

Portfolio Holder: Policy, Resources & Reform

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Our Equality Vision and Objectives

Appendix 2 - Details of initial engagement

Background papers - None

Our Equality Vision and Objectives

VISION

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has a vision for a fairer, stronger, cleaner city region where no one is left behind. To achieve this, we must eliminate discrimination and promote equality in our policies, service delivery and funding decisions.

We will prioritise those left behind, disadvantaged, or experiencing discrimination, and reduce inequality by changing how public services are delivered.

Our vision for equality, is for a City Region that:

- Achieves equity by doing more for those facing greatest disadvantage.
- Promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion in all that we do.
- Values and celebrates human diversity and treats everyone with dignity and respect.
- Champions social justice and challenges discrimination and prejudice.
- Involves people in decision making, develops solutions with them and removes barriers to participation in civic life.
- Promotes inclusive organisations with a culture that recognises the benefits and opportunities of diverse workforces.
- Has accessibility at the heart of all that we provide.

We will do this because nobody's life chances should be determined by where they were born, the colour of their skin, what they believe, who they love, their gender, chosen or otherwise, or whether they have a disability.

OBJECTIVES

Equality Objective One: <u>Employer</u>	We will continue to strive towards a diverse workforce which represents the communities we serve, and an inclusive and enabling workplace culture which provides equality of opportunity for everyone to thrive.
Descriptor	As an employer our objective is to be an organisation where our culture and ethos proclaims that equality, diversity, and inclusion are written in our DNA. We will be representative of the diversity of our local population at all levels of the organisation, and we will be a workplace where all feel valued, included, and equipped to achieve our purpose of a fairer, stronger, cleaner city region. We will celebrate our human difference and how it shapes the contributions we make.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement our people strategy which will include core priorities for equality, diversity, and inclusion • Implement a positive action programme to improve the diversity of our workforce. • Ensure there is an inclusive workplace culture, communications, and employee engagement • Review our employment policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive • Conduct a comprehensive review of our data and review benchmarking

Equality Objective Two: <u>Commissioner</u>	We will deepen our engagement with our communities and ensure their diverse needs continue to shape the services and programmes we deliver, actively removing barriers for under-represented groups and practising inclusion in all we do.
Descriptor	Equity will be our guiding principle in how we deliver services, increase prosperity, and drive the social regeneration of our city region, with nowhere and no-one left behind. Our approach will be fair, inclusive, and collaborative, addressing barriers to participation. We will measure our impact, report on it transparently, and expect to be held to account for our performance.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive review of the services we commission and provide through the lens of equality, diversity, and inclusion. • Ensure our engagement first policy is embedded and inclusive, reaching all communities who

	<p>need, or receive our services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and commission inclusive services and programmes based on evidence and engagement. • Embed social value and equality priorities in procurement processes and our supply chain.
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Equality Objective Three: Civic Leader	Working with our partners, we will lead from the front and use our sphere of influence in the Liverpool City Region, demonstrating that our positive actions working together will deliver change that benefits everyone in our city region
Descriptor	We will set an example for organisations across our city region to follow, being a beacon of best practice and championing equality, diversity, and inclusion. We will make common cause with others and work collaboratively to tackle inequality, discrimination, prejudice, and injustices and remove barriers to participation.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local and national campaigns for social justice • Be an active leader and play our part in educating discrimination • Facilitate increased diversity in senior leadership and board level positions across the City Region • Share best practice and promote organisational models that tackle inequality • Change the narrative in our region for those who face discrimination, encouraging positive narratives, challenge negative media, images, and communications