



Subject:	Diversity Action Plans
Date:	20 June 2022
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy - Corporate HR Manager - Development

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 2 activities.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 2 costs.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing an inclusive economy • Living here • Cross cutting • Organisational priorities
3.2	<p>As part of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Equality Action Plan. The three year Gender Action Plan and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan were approved at SP&R Committee in October 2024. Actions for Year 2 (2025/26) for both plans have been costed and are being presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.</p>
3.3	<p>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</p> <p>Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.</p>
3.4	<p>The GAP 24-27 was agreed following consultation with the Women's Steering Group and the Women's Network Group. Achievements in 2024/25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the annual International Women's Day event for staff in City Hall with a focus on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls • Ongoing financial support to raise awareness of the Raise Your Voice to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence • Funding and delivery of a programme of development for the Women's Network Group covering leadership and development, resilience, leading meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing in a Political Environment Training - for all relevant officers • Retention of the NI Gender Diversity Chartermark - Silver level (work continues towards Gold level) • Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) – retained Platinum level • Onus Safe City Accreditation - retained • Funding provided for external International Women’s Day event in city centre • Women’s Spaces event to promote work of WSG and the Gender Action Plan • Targeting of Employment and Upskilling Academies to women in low paid (female dominate) sectors including the provision of childcare
3.5	<p>Year 2 actions are set out in Appendix One. In addition to the financial resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan. Chief officers are asked to allocate the necessary resources to ensure delivery of the actions or ensure where appropriate that actions are incorporated into existing projects and work plans.</p>
3.6	<p>LGBTQIA+ Action Plan</p> <p>The LGBTQIA+ Action Plan for 2024-27, was developed in collaboration with the staff network “Proud” and this is also being presented, with costs for Year 2, for approval. Please see Appendix Two. The plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBTQIA+ communities.</p>
3.7	<p>Achievements in 2024/25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQIA+ inclusion and awareness training • LGBTQIA+ awareness training for senior leaders • Delivery of unconscious bias training • Fundraising bake sale with WNG and ABLE staff network • Transgender Day of Remembrance • Collaboration with staff network groups in other employers - lunch and learn session • Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members • Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network • Participation in Belfast Pride

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Planning Day • LGBTQIA Heritage walk • The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall.
3.8	<p>Disability Action Plan</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“DDA”) Section 49 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. Our current Plan runs, approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and reported on annually, runs from 2022 until 2025.</p>
3.9	<p>There are many ‘live’ actions still being delivered which fall under the Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Engagement with key stakeholder groups on the new Disability Action Plan from 2025 has also commenced. Central to this engagement is understanding the needs of disabled people in Belfast. This information will be combined with statistical data to develop an increased understanding of the actions Council can take, both strategically and operationally. The improvements being made will inform closer alignment of the statutory duties with the corporate planning cycle through establishing more defined outcomes for all nine equality groups including disability.</p>
3.10	<p>Members will be aware of the approval for a workshop to explore options for an Accessible City by 2025, with a key focus being inclusion of disabled people. The workshop is scheduled to take place in Autumn 2025, to align with the formal public consultation on the Disability Action Plan, as required by our statutory duties.</p>
3.11	<p>Detail on all of the actions delivered as part of the Disability Action Plan, the Gender Action Plan and the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan are included in the annual report to the Equality Commission due in August 2025.</p>
3.12	<p>Race Equality Action Plan</p> <p>Following one-to-one coaching facilitated by Dr Lucy Michael to identify and develop appropriate departmental actions, CMT has now agreed Race Equality Actions for 2025/26. The director of City and Organisational Strategy, SRO for the Race Equality Action Plan is working with Dr Michael to finalise a full report for Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.13	The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 2 activities is estimated at £35,500. The cost of delivery of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 2 is estimated at £9600. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.
3.14	The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.15	The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix One - Gender Action Plan for 2024-27 - Year 2
	Appendix Two - LGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2024-27 -Year 2