



Subject:	Diversity Action Plans
Date:	26th June, 2023
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy HR Manager - Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To ask the Committee to agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBT+ Action Plan Year 3 activities.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 3 costs.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how it 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:

	<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.</p> <p>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</p>
3.3	<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 (21-24) was agreed by the Council in July 21 following consultation with Women's Steering Group (WSG) the Women's Network and a wider group of staff that attended a Gender Inequalities workshop in January 2021.</p>
3.5	<p>Year 2 achievements / projects delivered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held annual International Women's Day event in City Hall • Funding provided for external International Women's Day event in city centre • Participation in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment- retained Silver level accreditation • Women's Leaders Programme delivered - 5 elected members and 17 officers participated • Implemented Menopause Policy and Guidance and established a Menopause Support Group • Delivered free and reusable period product pilots • Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) – retained Platinum level • Onus Safe City Accreditation - retained

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence • Transgender awareness raising and support events • Provision of upskilling academies in low paid sector (childcare, health care etc) • Progress on construction of Shankill Shared Women’s Centre <p>Year 3 of the current GAP (23/24) has been updated, costed and is being presented to Committee for approval. It is attached at 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.</p> <p>LGBT+ Action Plan</p>
3.7	<p>The LGBT+ Action Plan (21-24) was agreed by the Council in July 21 following consultation with the Proud Staff Network and senior LGBT+ champions. It 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 LGBT+ communities. Year 2 achievements / projects delivered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBT+ inclusion and awareness training • Trans awareness training • Understanding and reflecting the experiences of LGBTQ people with disabilities • Peer and reverse mentoring - staff network / allies including senior champion • Bi identity awareness training • Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network • Continued engagement with sector and support for external events • Staff and family Pride Walk • Participation in Pride 2022 • TDOR event in City Hall • The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall. • Achieved Silver Award in Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index
3.8	<p>Year 3 of the current LGBT+ plan (23/24) has been updated, costed and is being presented to Committee for approval. It is attached at Appendix 2. In addition to the financial</p>

	<p>resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.</p> <p>Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI)</p>
3.9	<p>We have participated in the WEI since 2019 and were awarded Silver Level accreditation in 2023, having previously attained Gold Level in 2022. Following detailed feedback from Stonewall on our 2023 submission, we have incorporated recommended actions into our 2023/24 action plan where appropriate.</p>
3.10	<p>There was a marked decrease in the number of organisations taking part in the WEI this year, with a reduction of approximately 50% against the previous year. Stonewall has advised that in many cases, organisations will take a year out of the WEI process to reassess and progress the required improvements. It is therefore proposed that the Council does not participate in the WEI this year and uses the time and resources to make the required improvements and the delivery of our planned programme of activities. The staff network “Proud” is content with this proposal on the basis that efforts and resources are redirected into delivery of the action plan.</p>
3.11	<p>Stonewall has informed us that it intends to carry out of a review of the WEI this year. We have informed Stonewall that we would be keen to feed into that review.</p> <p>Disability Action Plan</p>
3.12	<p>The Committee should also note 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. The Equality and Diversity Unit is in the process of reviewing and revising the Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Race Action Plan</p>
3.13	<p>The Director of City and Organisational Strategy, as Executive Sponsor for Race, has been leading on the development of the Race Equality Action Plan. The development of the plan has considered how we deliver our services and actions that we can take as an employer to create a more diverse workforce, and as a city leader, to influence and bring about change.</p>

3.14	<p>The draft action plan is currently with an external expert who we have asked to act as a “critical friend” before further consultation progresses.</p> <p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>3.15 The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 3 activities is estimated at £36,000.</p> <p>3.16 The cost of delivery of the LGBT+ Action Plan year 2 is estimated at £9300. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>3.17 The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.</p> <p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>3.18 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.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Gender Action Plan 21-24 - Year 3</p> <p>Appendix 2 - LGBT+ Action Plan 21-24 - Year 3</p>