

# **Equality and Diversity Group**

## **Draft Strategy and Action Plan 2019 – 2021**

### **Consultation Questionnaire**

#### **Do you have any comments on the Background (page1)?**

The circulation of the draft Strategy and Action Plan is useful in providing clarity on the background of the group.

#### **Do you have any comments on the Membership (page 2)? Is there anyone else you think we should invite to join the Group?**

The terms of reference and the connections to the Statutory Duty Network, including the terms of appointment and nomination process and their application should, in order to demonstrate transparency and efficient use of the public purse be included. In addition, some thought should be given to wider representation of other section 75 groups ie race, LGBT+ etc

#### **Do you have any comments on the Purpose (page2)?**

The purpose of the Group should include the identification of inequalities which, in particular, could assist Council's in the community planning process.

#### **Do you have any comments on the Reporting Mechanisms (page3)?**

Should representatives of other section 75 groups be added to the membership of the Equality and Diversity Group as mentioned above, the reporting mechanisms should reflect this.

#### **Do you have any comments on the Framework (page 3)?**

The definition of the overall aim of the Equality and Diversity Group “to support and assist Council's to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations as an employer, a service provider and civic leader” is welcome. In addition, it is vital that meaningful outputs and outcomes in each of these areas are achieved.

### **Do you have any comments on the Outcomes/Outputs (page 4)?**

The Council is of the view that alignment to the draft Programme for Government is appropriate. Links to the conditions of wellbeing within the community plans should be considered also.

In relation to the second bullet point contained within the strategy on page 4 which reads “Council’s will be representative of the communities which they serve”, this should be amended to:

“Diverse communities will benefit from the best practice/activities undertaken by councils” or “Councils will attract a more diverse applicant pool for job opportunities”.

It would also be beneficial if local authorities could have access to better data to assist with more informed decision-making.

### **Do you agree with the actions which have been identified (page 5-6)?**

#### **Yes/No/Any comments?**

- It is not clear from the table included whether the headings in “bold” are themes. If they are themes, other headings related to section 75 groups should be added along with disability.
- Ownership and responsibility for tasks should be included as well as timeframes.
- The inclusion of data strategy action is welcome and will assist with the identification of inequalities going forward as there are significant gaps for S75 groups. Given the importance of this area and the focus on evidence based decision making consideration of a sub-group should be discussed.
- A renewed focus on equality outcomes is welcome, particularly as many councils will now be undertaking reviews of their Equality Schemes and given the time which has elapsed since the review of Local Government.
- The provision of guidance to Councils should consider the work ongoing across key stakeholders in this area, including NILGA and individual local authorities.
- Clarification should also be provided on whether partnership working is being undertaken with NISRA and the Equality Commission

**Do you have any other comments you wish to make?**

Clarification should be provided on whether Disability has been included as a specific theme due to statutory duties. In addition, the strategy in general could be more reflective of section 75 groups.

Please return to [lorna.parsons@lgsc.org.uk](mailto:lorna.parsons@lgsc.org.uk) by **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019**.