

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 8 March 2016

Title of report: Inclusion and Diversity in Kirklees – Work on a new policy statement for 2016/17

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan ?	No
Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny ?	No
Date signed off by <u>Director</u> & name	Ruth Redfern – 29 February 2016
Is it signed off by the Director of Resources?	David Smith – 23 February 2016
Is it signed off by the Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Monitoring?	John Chapman - 26 February 2016 (Deputy Head)
Cabinet member portfolio	Resources and Community Safety

Electoral [wards](#) affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

To seek the approval of the Policy Committee (7 March) and Cabinet (8 March) to the work undertaken to draft a new policy statement on "Inclusion and diversity in Kirklees for 2016/17", and, if accepted and supported, to recommend its referral to the Council meeting (23 March) for approval and adoption.

2. Key points

At the Policy Committee (23 September 2015), members agreed to undertake a review of the councils current equality and diversity strategy, which is part of the policy framework of the council.

The Policy Committee established an informal task and finish group, consisting of Councillors: Marielle O'Neill (chair), Bill Armer, Amanda

Pinnock, Sheikh Ullah and Gemma Wilson, which met on several occasions in the period from October 2015 to February 2016, to review the topic, and to draft a new and more appropriate policy statement on inclusion and diversity for 2016/17.

Progress reports on the work have been shared with the Policy Committee. However, the formal recommendations on the adoption of the new policy statement rest with the full Council meeting.

The Policy Committee and Cabinet are asked to consider progress with the work on the policy statement to-date and, subject to any further comments and/or corrections, refer the report and decision on the adoption of the policy statement to Council for approval.

3. Information required to take a decision

The work on the policy statement to-date is described within two documents which are appended to this report. These are:

- the diagram illustrating the key components of the new Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Statement
- the new I&D Policy Statement

From the outset the Task and Finish Group wanted to modernise the organisation's approach to this agenda, embracing new ideas and ways of working which would be effective for Kirklees and its residents. The Group wanted to look at aspects such as incorporating I&D into the core business of the Council, improved use of insight from communities from Kirklees and staff to enhance services, work towards an inclusive organisation that promotes and values diversity as an asset and develop emotionally intelligent leadership around I&D.

The above modernisation agenda was extensively researched by engaging with other organisations, taking expert witness statements and reviewing relevant literature.

Following a first draft of the Policy Statement an extensive consultation exercise was undertaken with all political parties and the Council's Equality Employee Networks. The primary issues highlighted from the feedback were:

- All groups were supportive of the direction of travel within Policy Statement
- Support for the values-based approach to I&D
- All concerned liked the way the Statement was promoting I&D as a strategic asset promoting improved "business" outcomes
- The language in the Statement needs to be more accessible
- To articulate better the promotion of I&D both internally and externally
- A proposal to include an anti-bullying champion within the Council

All these issues have been carefully considered by the Task and Finish Group and are reflected in the finalised Policy Statement appended.

A further consultation exercise was undertaken by sending the Statement with the above feedback to all leaders of the political parties; no comments from this exercise have been received.

4. Implications for the Council

If approved, the implementation and the application of the new policy statement will have implications for the work of the council and its services. It will mean, for example, the organisation will have adopted a new values-based approach to I&D, a business outcome and asset-based approach to the whole area of work helping it becomes core to the everyday business of all services. These will help to improve service delivery and employment practices by having a more inclusive way of working with both communities and staff.

5. Consultees and their opinions

The work on the policy statement has continued to develop in the period from January 2016 to-date. Early drafts of the final document, which are now appended to this report, were shared with the following:-

- Members of the Policy Committee - Task and Finish group
- Policy Committee
- Cabinet Members
- Leaders of the political groups
- Chairs of the Employee Equality Networks

Their comments and views are reflected in the work on the final draft of the policy statement

6. Next steps

If approved, officers will use the content of the policy statement to help shape an I&D Strategy, implementation plan and working practices of the council and its services (see paragraph 4 above)

Officers will also provide progress reports for Cllr Carole Pattison, Chair of the Policy Committee, and Cllr Marielle O'Neill, the Chair of the task and finish group, about how the application and use of the policy statement and associated work will progress, in practice, in 2016/17.

7. Officer recommendations and reasons

Members of the Policy Committee are asked to support the work on the new "Inclusion and diversity statement for 2016/17". If so, this will be shared with the Cabinet on 8 March 2016, which may then decide to refer a decision on the formal adoption of the document to the Council meeting on 23 March 2016

8. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

Cllr Turner, Cabinet Member for (Resources and Community Safety) supports the recommendation to refer details of the final policy statement to Council (23 March) for consideration and approval.

8. Contact officer and relevant papers

David Bundy, Corporate Policy Officer 01484 221000

Attached papers:

- Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement
- Equality and Diversity Graphic

9. Assistant director responsible

Kimiyo Rickett, Assistant Director for Communities and Leisure

Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement

From equality to inclusion: our Kirklees approach Fairness, understanding and valuing people

Positive and inclusive approach: we will give equality, diversity and inclusion a higher priority by having a positive approach, going beyond minimum legal requirements and ensuring diversity and inclusion is in everything we do in Kirklees and improves performance and service delivery.

A more strategic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion means viewing diversity as a business strategy, not simply a management issue. This recognises compelling evidence that managing equality and diversity well and developing a culture of inclusion leads to improved business outcomes – both internally (increased diversity improves problem solving, innovation, productivity and other outcomes) and externally (we will deliver better services and outcomes for residents if we better understand and are more representative and inclusive of the communities we serve).

The way we do things in Kirklees: we will demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion through our actions and behaviours by raising awareness, understanding and knowledge within the workforce and communities around diversity and inclusion through education and training.

There is a clear argument for actively managing diversity and inclusion rather than assuming we will naturally derive the benefits. This means staff at all levels demonstrating inclusive behaviours, respecting diverse opinions and actively championing diversity and inclusion. Our six Kirklees behaviours (Positive-Respectful-Supportive-Honest-Flexible-Communicate) reflect this approach. Whilst education, training and awareness are important, we must go beyond this to: develop a culture of inclusion; acknowledge diversity and inclusion as an essential component of effective leadership; and better understand and mitigate conscious and unconscious biases. Inclusion and diversity will be at the heart of how the Council and communities themselves work together and understand each other better.

A committed and diverse workforce: we recognise that our diverse workforce is our biggest asset and we will take all opportunities to try to achieve a diverse workforce that represents all communities in Kirklees.

Promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. Kirklees Council aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, with ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. A culture, where everyone feels valued and respected and where different characteristics (both visible and invisible), backgrounds and perspectives are recognised and valued, is key to improving organisational performance. Diversity can increase flexibility, creativity and problem-solving by providing a wider range of perspectives. At a time when the council is striving to support and enable communities to do more for themselves and each other, a representative workforce with a greater understanding of different sections of society is best placed to deliver better outcomes for all of Kirklees' residents.

Spread the word – that Kirklees represents and values everyone by sharing stories and experiences.

Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be a conscious and proactive one. We will spread the word that Kirklees represents and values everyone, by sharing stories and experiences, encouraging role models and champions and actively celebrating diversity.

Inclusive policies – we will routinely review our policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive.

Our policies, including our internal, people policies, should support inclusion. We will ensure this happens through regular review and reflection.

Zero tolerance on abuse, harassment, bullying and violence – taking action, taking all cases seriously and making it safe to speak out.

Taking action, taking all cases seriously and making it safe to speak out are essential to delivering an inclusive culture and to generate increased trust. The Council will have an anti-bullying champion at senior level and appropriate procedures to support taking a zero tolerance approach.

Listen and act – we will listen to staff and citizens to make things better.

In a climate in which councils are being asked to do more with less, insight into the real needs of citizens is essential. Citizen insight means gaining a deep understanding about our customers – based on their behaviours, experiences, beliefs and needs. A strong staff voice and ethos of cooperation and inclusivity is also essential.

We need to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of our approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion through our intelligence, data and broader insight.

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