

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Non-Key
--------------------------------	----------------------------------

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 06 November 2024
Subject:	Adoption of a Bury Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028.	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion	

Summary

The Council last set equality objectives in a joint four-year Inclusion Strategy with Bury CCG in 2020. This aimed to set the foundations for building an effective Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) function and governance structures in both organisations and a review of these objectives has shown that these aims have been met.

With the dissolution of the CCG, the proposed 2024-2028 strategy and objectives are Council only. These build on the strengths of the successes from the previous strategy and proposes a set of priorities for 2024-28. The proposed 2024-2028 EDI strategy is presented for approval.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to note the successes of the 2020-2024 inclusion strategy and approve the proposed 2024-2028 strategy for adoption by the Council.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To support continued focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across the borough and support the strategic delivery of LET'S Do It through the prism of protected characteristics.

Adoption of this strategy will ensure continued compliance with the council's legal obligations set out within the Equality Act 2010.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Sam McVaigh
Position: Director of People and Inclusion
Department: Corporate Core
E-mail: s.mcvaigh@bury.gov.uk

Name: Lee Cawley
Position: EDI Manager
Department: Corporate Core
E-mail: l.cawley@bury.gov.uk

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The 2020-2024 Inclusion Strategy was developed jointly by the Bury Council and CCG partnership following a 2020 internal review into inclusive practice. The strategy was co-produced by staff groups, community leaders and senior champions. The internal review and the strategy formed part of the commitment from the partnership to improve equalities and inclusion practice as an employer, service provider and commissioner.
- 1.2 The proposed 2024-2028 EDI strategy is a Council only strategy given the dissolution of the CCG in July 2022 which has once again been co-produced with community leaders, senior champions and staff groups. The strategy supports the principles and aims of LET'S Do It through the prism of protected characteristics
- 1.3 The setting of objectives and publishing an EDI strategy fulfils the Council's legal duty to set, publish and review equality objectives as set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.4 As the current joint strategy has come to a conclusion, the council has a legal obligation to review progress against these objectives and set a new set of four-year objectives. A review has been undertaken with the new proposed objectives and strategy for 2024-2028 building on the strengths and achievements of its predecessor.

2. **Review of the 2020-2024 Inclusion Strategy and Objectives**

- 2.1 The 2020-2024 Inclusion Strategy included seven objectives, six of which related to the Council. These were framed around building an effective EDI function and governance structure which included collecting good equalities data and information to use as a benchmark and evidence base for equalities and inclusion work across the borough. The objectives were:
 - **Performance and Scrutiny**
 - **Equalities Data and Information**
 - **Community Engagement**
 - **Representative Workforce**
 - **Training and Learning**
 - **Framework Delivery**
- 2.2 A full review of these objectives has identified that five of the objectives have been partially met and one objective, that of delivering a framework to work towards, has been superseded by Greater Manchester level developments which the Council is fully engaged with.
- 2.3 The achievements in five of the objectives have seen:

- Specific roles and responsibilities allocated to EDI at Director and senior management level
- Regular reporting on the council's EDI achievements, activity and governance
- The adoption of an Equality Impact Assessment tool and process
- The delivery of a large-scale race conversations community exercise
- Established strong links with community groups and VCSE organisations
- Delivery of tutor led learning for Council managers and non desk based front line colleagues
- Access to EDI e-learning module for desk-based colleagues.

A full analysis of the 2020-2024 inclusion strategy is included in appendix A of this report.

2.4 Through increased focus and a strong commitment to inclusion, there have been a range of broader benefits arising from the successes of the 2020-2024 strategy. These demonstrate the reach and scale of the council's inclusion work extending beyond the specific inclusion objectives and strategies, these include:

- A new accessible and easy to navigate council website informed by feedback from the race conversations exercise
- Adopting the Armed Forces Covenant and achieving gold employer status in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme
- Achieving Disability Confident Leader status, recognising the council as a leading disabled friendly employer and recruiter
- Supporting the socio-economically vulnerable with cost of living through the Let's Manage Tough Times Together campaign
- Appointing an ethnic minority liaison officer in licensing to support engagement with ethnic minority licensees
- Increased engagement through the neighbourhood teams with hard-to-reach communities
- Strong support and co-design work with the Bury LGBTQI forum, Bury Faith Forum and Bury Older People's Network
- A significant increase in meaningful inclusion communications and conversation internally and externally

2.5 The 2020-2024 inclusion strategy has been delivered against the backdrop of the covid-19 pandemic which presented significant challenges to residents and the council as an employer and service provider in terms of building and maintaining inclusive practice.

2.6 The overarching aims of the strategy were to solidify the council's EDI function, assign accountability and governance and lay strong foundations to build effective community engagement and activity all of which have been achieved. The strategy outcomes can therefore be regarded as being successful. Those areas not fully delivered against and learning from the detailed review of the Strategy's achievements have been used to inform the new 2024-2028 Strategy.

3. Development of the Council's EDI Strategy & Objectives for 2024-2028

3.1 The proposed 2024-2028 EDI strategy and objectives have built on the strength and achievements from the 2020-2024 strategy, using these achievements as a foundation to have a larger focus on EDI in practice and support inclusion within the borough's communities to ensure that all Bury people share in the success of the delivery of the LET'S ambition, whatever their background.

3.2 Key focus areas were identified to include within the new EDI strategy, considering the LET'S Do It! Objectives, residents feedback through community engagement, pulse engagement surveys with staff and the Council's own workforce equalities monitoring.

3.3 Additionally consultation took place with all internal Council directorates, colleague groups, Bury VCFA organisations, Persona and at community inclusion events Bury Pride in June 2024 and Collabor8 in July 2024. Appendix B of this report gives further details of this consultation.

3.4 Feedback from this consultation suggested that the Council's new objectives and strategy should have a focus on:

- A greater understanding of intersectionality when commissioning or planning, developing and delivering services
- Ensuring safe spaces for intersectional identities
- Providing self support for people with protected characteristics
- Greater collaboration on delivering EDI in communities
- Increased engagement from council workforce with communities of interest and identity

3.5 Based on this consultation the proposed 2024-2028 EDI strategy is appended in Appendix C and has six objectives:

3.5.1 Skills and employment

This objective aims to reduce the barriers and disadvantages people with protected characteristics may face when accessing skills and employment.

3.5.2 Health inequalities

This objective focuses on identifying and reducing health inequalities experienced by people due to having protected characteristics.

3.5.3 Housing and accommodation

This objective supports having a focus on the housing and accommodation needs of our residents with protected characteristics and intersectional disadvantages and responding to equalities requirements in housing legislation.

3.5.4 Community engagement

This objective focuses on taking a multi organisation approach with VCSE organisations and Team Bury to support community cohesion and strong two-way engagement with communities of identity and interest in Bury.

3.5.5 Data collation, analysis and governance

This objective supports collecting good demographics data from residents and our workforce and using this well to tailor our services to the needs of people who use them.

3.5.6 Workforce representation

This objective supports the council's ambition to have a workforce that closer reflects the demographic make-up of the borough of Bury and ensures our workforce inclusion work is reflective of the GM People Inclusion Standards framework. A full four-year workforce representation plan is appended in appendix D

4. Governance & Reporting

- 4.1 A quarterly report detailing progress against the strategy will be produced by the EDI Manager and shared with senior officers as well as the Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion. A formal annual progress report will also be produced and shared publicly.
- 4.2 To drive delivery of the Council Strategy as well as the wider Team Bury inclusion commitment the current Inclusion Working Group will be replaced with two new groups:
 - A new council inclusion group at officer level to provide strategic oversight of the strategy and to ensure consistency in applying the strategy across all council departments
 - A partnership group of Team Bury inclusion leads which will be an evolution of the current Inclusion Working Group and report to the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- 4.3 The proposed council inclusion group will include representatives from management teams in each council directorate, key stakeholder teams and the employee equality group leads this committee will provide oversight and direction in the delivery of the council's EDI strategy and EDI activities.
- 4.4 There is a strong link between inclusion and community cohesion and community safety. To ensure actions in this strategy reflect this strong link, the EDI manager will report on strategy action and progress to the Bury Community Cohesion group chaired by Bury VCFA.
- 4.5 The Strategic Partnerships manager will sit on the council inclusion group, enabling a cross reference between inclusion actions, community safety planning and social cohesion activities in the borough

4.6 The proposed Team Bury inclusion leads group will support strategic and multi-disciplinary partnership working on inclusion across the borough.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

The EDI strategy has clear demonstrable links to the Let's Do It Strategy. Each objective in the EDI strategy supports a focus of inclusion through the prism of protected characteristics, enabling people with protected characteristics to realise the benefits of the Let's Do It outcome measures.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

A full equality impact assessment has been carried out and is included in appendix E. The assessment has concluded that the EDI strategy, if implemented would have only positive impacts.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

No negative impacts identified.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The lack of EDI strategy and objectives poses a risk of excluding people with protected characteristics, potentially causing discrimination and harassment	Strategy approval, communication and continuous monitoring and review
Lack of compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty legal obligations	Strategy approval and implementation will meet these legal obligations
Lack of clear governance and priorities EDI	Agreement of this report, strategy approval and close and continuous joint working internal and external stakeholders

Legal Implications:

Adoption of the strategy will ensure continual compliance with the Council's obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from the report.

Appendices:

Please list any appended documents.

Appendix A Review and Analysis of the 2020-2024 Inclusion Strategy

Appendix B 2024-2028 EDI Strategy Consultation

Appendix C Bury Council EDI Strategy 2024-2028

Appendix D Bury Council Workforce Representation Plan 2024-2028

Appendix E Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers:

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
VCFA	Voluntary, Community and Faith Alliance
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises