

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Cabinet	Date: 27 March 2023 5 April 2023
Subject:	Annual ED&I Report 2022	
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	
Wards Affected:	All	
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework: No
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Appendices:	1. 2023-2024 Gloucester City Council ED&I Action Plan 2. 2022 Gloucester City Council Equalities Awareness Calendar 3. O&S Update on Calls to Action Resulting from The Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations	

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the work Council Officers have undertaken regarding equalities, as well as the work the Equality and Diversity Working Group has completed over the last year.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the information contained in the report and make any recommendations to the Cabinet.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the work undertaken by council officers, the Equality and Diversity Working Group, elected members and council partners regarding equalities be welcomed.
- 2.3 Cabinet is asked to **APPROVE** the 2023-2024 ED&I Action Plan set out in Appendix One

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Equality and Diversity has been a major focus for the Council over the past year, and continues to be central to our work. This has included us embedding ED&I objectives into the Council Plan, and reviewing and approving a new 2023 Action Plan for ED&I, along with various other initiatives which took place across the Council and throughout the city. Below are various examples of some of the notable ED&I work which has taken place across the Council.

3.2 In January 2022, the Gloucester City Council Council Plan was approved unanimously, with one of the central themes being 'tackling equalities'. This theme runs throughout the Council Plan and underpins many of the actions, but also makes up one of our Council Plan 'promises', which three specific actions fall under:

- Deliver the Barton and Tredworth Task Force, reporting on and embedding learnings from this work.
- Review and update the People Impact Assessment process to ensure equality is reflected in council decision-making and ensure that the Equalities Working Group action plan is delivered across our teams by integrating into team service plans each year.
- Support the Commission to Review Race Relations and formally consider any recommendations that are relevant to the council – reporting on progress and further activity in 2023.

All three of these actions are progressing as planned, with on time completion expected, as per the Council Plan update which went to Cabinet in January 2023.

3.3 The feedback report from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2022 referred to 'brilliant individual examples of work to tackle inequalities in the city supported by a positive approach to collaboration and partnership working across the board'. To further this work, the report recommended the Council develop 'a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, both internally and with its partners, to be matched by adequate resource.' Work has commenced within the Council to begin developing this strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities and consider any further actions needed, while we continue to strengthen our existing ED&I work.

3.4 A new ED&I Action plan was developed in November 2022 following the Equality Framework for Local Government Self-Assessment. The ED&I Working Group have identified six new SMART goals/actions which form the 2023-2024 ED&I Action Plan, as set out in Appendix One.

3.5 In June 2022, The Mayor, Sheriff, and Leader of the Council, alongside officers, took part in a Simul-Spec Walk hosted by the Gloucestershire Sight Loss Council. A simul-spec walk involves participants wearing glasses that replicate different eye conditions, to experience what it's like for those with sight issues navigating around Gloucester. The walk was led by Alun Davies, Wayne Hands and Julie Stephens, who were joined by Julie's guide dog Heidi. They spoke about some of the challenges and wider experiences of those who are blind, partially sighted or vision impaired. One outcome of this session has been to feedback on the proposed layout of the public realm within Westgate Street, as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

3.6 Throughout the 2022 Calendar year, the Community Wellbeing Team have promoted both internally and externally a calendar of equality events. As set out in Appendix Two, some of the events included:

- Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27th
- Pride Month - Month of June

- Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th
- Black History Month - Month of October

3.6.1 A renewed Calendar for 2023 is underway and will be implemented similarly to 2022.

3.7 In 2022, Officers continued to work towards fulfilling the Calls to Action that resulted from the Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations. The legacy institution identified, GREAG, is an emerging, black-led group that will have county-wide focus, and they received initial funding from the NHS and Gloucestershire County Council during 2022. A more detailed overview of work undertaken to progress the Calls to Action can be found in Appendix Three.

3.8 Within the culture service, lots has been done over the past year to further embed ED&I into the service, as well as ensure our spaces are more accessible for our customers.

3.8.1 In January 2022, an access survey of the three cultural services venues (Blackfriars, Guildhall & Museum of Gloucester) was undertaken to assess what the buildings already do well for customers/visitors with accessibility requirements, and to develop a road map of future developments. This has led to the establishment of a working group for accessibility, which meets bi-monthly to assess progress - with the three venues working in synergy to achieve these shared goals.

3.8.2 Steps taken have included further work alongside the Gloucestershire Sight Loss Council, such as venue walk-arounds to gain further knowledge of ways we can improve venues for customers and visitors with varying levels of sight-loss. There has also been a focus on working collaboratively regarding new exhibitions that come to the Museum of Gloucester, to ensure that these exhibitions are as accessible as the previous ones and assess ways to enhance accessibility.

3.8.3 The Guildhall has been a part of the 'Attitude is Everything' charter since 2014, and an exercise was undertaken to re-assess the Guildhall in 2021, leading to the re-accreditation of bronze status. Part of the charter requires a re-assessment every two years, so work is now focused on the next assessment in 2023, with an aim to achieve a silver accreditation.

3.8.4 Progress so far has included portable hearing loops for cultural venues and a review of static loops, with work ongoing to ensure these are in every meeting room across the three venues. The carer/ personal assistant ticket process for customers has also been formalised, along with wider work on the accessibility section of websites – including improvements to site maps of venues, and an accessibility feedback form to gather comments and areas for improvement.

3.8.5 The Culture team have embedded ED&I into their ways of working – including regular operational discussions regarding ED&I, ongoing work, and equality events, and a focus on ensuring staff actively consider ED&I and bring this to the forefront of decision making across Gloucester's cultural venues.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 There are no social value considerations required for this work.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 There are no environmental impacts related to this work.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 This is an annual report on the Council's ED&I Work, therefore no Alternative Options are applicable.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 This is an annual report on the Council's ED&I Work.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Work will continue towards achieving the actions outlined in Appendix One.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The cost of ED&I training is included within the organisational training budget.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 Officers will continue to work together with One Legal to implement the delivery of the activities as outlined in Appendix One.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 Management of risk and opportunity is overseen by those with responsibility for leading on each action.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None arising directly from this report.

Potential Media Interest – to be completed for SMT/Cabinet Briefing purposes. Remove prior to publication of report. Draft report to be sent pressoff@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Background Documents: None