

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**EQUALITIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017,  
Gartree Room, County Hall at 10:00am**

Neil Hanney (Chair)	Assistant Director, Commissioning and Development, Children and Families
Ann Carruthers	Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation, Environment and Transport
Jackie Mould	Head of Policy, Economy and Communities, Chief Execs
Mo Seedat	Head of Democratic Services
Alyson Podmore	HR Business Partner, CR, CE and CS
Donna Worship	Policy Manager, Chief Exec's
Sana Mahomed	Equalities Officer, Unison
Chris Housden	Planning Officer, Adults & Communities
Richard Wilding	Service Development Business Partner, Strategy and Business Intelligence
Rabinder Lail	Chair of Black Workers' Group
Liz Goodman	Senior Comms Officer and Chair of LGBT Staff Network
Mandy Baughurst	Learning and Development Advisor
Andrew Jeffreys	Policy Officer (Equalities), Chief Exec's

**Apologies**

Gordon McFarlane, Mike McHugh, Heather Pick, Anthony Stone

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action by</b>
Item 1	Welcome – present and apologies – see above	
Item 2a	<p><b>Minutes of Equalities Board held 26 September 2016</b></p> <p><b>i. Accuracy</b></p> <p>There were no points of inaccuracy to record.</p>	
Item 2b	<p><b>ii. Matters arising</b></p> <p>The equalities monitoring policy has now gone out and can be implemented once changes to Oracle have been completed.</p> <p>Induction information on the workers’ groups has now been updated.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recirculate Equalities Monitoring Policy</li> <li>• MB to provide clarification on mentor vs line manager role</li> <li>• GMcF still to pursue answer regarding Rutland building lift with Property.</li> <li>• Improved engagement with DWG under consideration.</li> </ul>	<p>AJ</p> <p>MB</p> <p>GMcF</p> <p>DW &amp; AJ</p>
Item 3	<p><b>‘Spring Board’ Applications 16/17</b></p> <p>Although there were nine fewer applications for the current programme compared to last year’s cohort, this continues to be an effective and popular programme as both the data trend (an increase in women managers at Grade 13 since 2010/11) and the selected testimonies from participants show. 32 out of 37 applications were accepted, 4 declined and one withdrew.</p> <p>CH asked whether there were any significant observations to take from the declined applications. MB replied that one application was notably poor. RL and SM commented that the programme helped participants to reaffirm themselves and their role; the toolkit approach was also very useful.</p>	

It was agreed that L&D should continue to promote the programme particularly as budget for equalities had not been cut. The next application round will be in May / June.

**Action:**

DEG representatives to promote the programme within their sections.

DEG reps

Item 4 **‘Spring Forward into Action’ Applications 16/17**

The pilot combined ‘Spring Forward’ and ‘Spring Forward into Action’ group resulted in 17 applications compared to 27 across both groups last year. One withdrawal and one unavoidable non-attendance meant that the 15 remaining applicants could be offered a place from the 18 available places.

Although, as a pilot, it is intended there should be a higher level of post-course evaluation by L&D, there were as yet no obvious reasons for the fall off in applications but MB noted that, previously, word of mouth had been very effective about publicising the programme. LG wondered whether participants who had developed their presentation skills could be asked to be ambassadors for the programme.

The next application round will be in May / June.

**Action:**

DEG representatives to promote the programme to increase take-up and ensure no barriers exist to staff accessing information about the scheme.

DEG reps

Item 5 **Reverse mentoring proposal**

Key discussion points from the paper were:

- Level of mentee and should mentors and mentees come from the same department?
- Relationship to the Workers’ Group Champions proposal [Agenda Item 6]?
- Can the programme be effectively evaluated?
- Were the objectives sufficiently clear?

**Action:**

Proposal to be reviewed against these concerns and presented to next Board meeting with a view to agreeing its inclusion in the refreshed Equality Strategy Action Plan.

GMcF, L&D, DW

Item 6 **Workers' group champions proposal**

MB said that consultation with the WGs has taken place and a champion has already come forward from the BWG. The agreed level for the champion is Grade 15 and upward. It was commented that the Equalities Board itself is effectively a champion group. DW said that the role required champions to commit to a higher degree of involvement than individual Board members.

**Action:**

As for Item 5.

Item 7 **Equality Strategy Action Plan 17/18**

AJ commented on the reasons given in the paper for reviewing the Action Plan review, principally that the changed operating environment and capacity meant it was necessary to ensure a focus on projects that offered the highest level of benefit against overall Strategy aims and objectives. This would also help to bring the Plan to life against any perception that it was simply a long list of open-ended initiatives.

It was agreed to set up a workshop in February / March with interested Board members to identify priority projects and amend the Action Plan accordingly for discussion at the next Board meeting.

**Actions:**

- Invitations would be sent to DEGs, WGs, HR, Comms, L&D.
- Check Outlook calendars for suitable dates, draft and circulate agenda / itinerary.

All

AJ

Item 8 **'Making information accessible to everyone' guidance update**

The draft changes to the guidance were agreed. It was observed in discussion that, while the amended document said little that was new, there was a focus on the

Accessible Information Standard's requirements on making information more accessible to people with sensory disabilities.

DW advised that work on a draft Accessible Information Standard Policy had stalled due to the Equalities Officer vacancy but could now be brought back to the next Board meeting.

**Actions:**

- Hold discussions with NHS to align guidance and policy (to support health and social care integration) AJ
- Bring policy proposal to next Board meeting AJ
- Comms to provide additional comments LG

Item 9 **Improvements to equalities in recruitment**

A questionnaire was agreed to be the best method of feedback so that evidenced reasons from both successful and unsuccessful candidates in relation to the representation of individuals from (i) a BME background; and (ii) declaring a disability could be identified.

**Action:**

- To present a draft recruitment questionnaire to the next Board meeting. AP

Existing recruitment training allowed for Unconscious Bias but not in a consistent manner. The proposal to make it a mandatory and explicitly separate process as well as extending it to the representative recruitment panel would ensure that at least one panel member would have UB expertise.

There was discussion whether it was appropriate at this stage to make UB training mandatory for managers other than Chairs as it was unlikely that a Chair would not be available for a panel (eg: sickness on the interview day). LG suggested that the recruitment guidance would be better accessed through the recruitment portal rather than the intranet.

It was agreed to make UB training mandatory for panel Chairs.

**Action:**

Consider future how unconscious bias training and inclusion in recruitment and selection training could be improved.

AP/MB

Item 10 **Workforce representation equality data**

RW presented updates of targets on gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality and current position. LG asked whether the small increase in percentage of employees declaring their sexual orientation was attributable either to Oracle self-reporting or from application forms. On promoting self-declaration generally, DW noted that issues with Oracle had stalled this initiative but it could now be taken forward with the increase in PEC branch capacity. NH commented that this could be one of the priorities to focus on in the Action Plan review.

CH asked whether the targets were still realistic given that they were based on relatively old (2011) Census data. RW commented there was no other viable source. In discussion it was also observed that LCC generally had an older / ageing workforce.

**Action:**

Relaunch self-declaration campaign including non-PC paper based options

AJ, LG

Item 11 **Equalities Officer update**

AJ introduced himself and commented on activity so far including meeting with each DWG / Chair and the HMD 2017 commemoration. Initial work going forward included the Action Plan review process and the possibility of committing LCC to the Leonard Cheshire Disability 'Change100' programme offering disabled recent graduates or undergraduates expecting a 2:1 or 1:1 award a three-month work experience placement. Employer costs were £3,750 plus a salary based on Living Wage standards. This could also be a suitable project for the Action Plan as LCD required applications by the end of March.

**Action:**

- Recirculate paper/publicity for Change 100

AJ

- Nominations to be sought from departments for suitable placement opportunities

DEGs

Item 12 **Update from departments**

Deferred to next meeting.

Item 13 **Update from workers' groups**

**BWG Update –**

RL commented that the group was currently organising its conference for 22/23 March on the theme of Assertiveness.

**LGBT Update –**

The Stonewall awards saw LCC drop to 36<sup>th</sup> place overall from last year but still as the top local authority plus a Highly Commended award for the LGBT+ network.

Transgender guidance development is scheduled for a meeting with Leics police and Fire services on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. As part of the supporting processes to this initiative, work was ongoing to ensure that the new intranet and other internal systems were either gender neutral or offered a Mx title facility; this needed to extend to external / supplier-sourced systems which were not as inclusive.

LG also to present to HR management.

Item 14 **Faith and festivals**

LG demonstrated how signposting and content presentation on the new intranet and link to Yammer improved awareness of faith-related events.

Item 15 **Any other business**

A&C Equalities post (CH) is being deleted in April; there is a need to plan coverage going forward.

**Action:**

Organise meeting between PEC and A&C

JM, DW, AJ, CH

**Date and time of next meeting:** Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 10am-12pm, Gartree Committee Room

**Minutes to:** Equalities Board, John Sinnott, Cllr. Pam Posnett