

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty

Does this report require to be approved?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Ref FW/AC

Date

26/04/24

Delivery Framework for Equalities – update

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Executive Summary

This report provides Elected Members with an update on the Council's Delivery Plan for Equalities that includes:

- Progress on the establishment of the Council's Equality Board
- Progress on the campaigns and activities undertaken in 2023-24 and those planned for 2024-25, across three areas of focus:
 1. Driving improved equality outcomes in the Council's workplace environment and labour market.
 2. Positively influencing the design and environment of our schools, town centres, community hubs and service delivery locations
 3. Working with our Community Boards and Champions to improve equality and inclusion in our communities.

The report also sets out the timeline for the review of the Council's current Equality Strategy and Equality Outcomes throughout 2024. The renewed Strategy and Outcomes will cover the years 2025-29.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee:

- (1) Note the substantive work that has been undertaken in 2023-24 to progress the Delivery Framework for Equalities.
- (2) Approve the new Delivery Plan for Equalities – campaigns and activities, 2024-25
- (3) Approve the timeline for the review and development of the Equality Strategy and Equality Outcomes for 2025-29; and
- (4) Otherwise note the contents of the report

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition statement All ambition statements

Programme of Work All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 Members are reminded of the Equalities Delivery Framework report that was submitted to the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee in February 2023 detailing the Councils' new arrangements to support the equalities agenda.
 - 1.2 The establishment of a new Equalities Board for the Council was regarded as a key mechanism for not only ensuring the delivery and mainstreaming of equality across all services, and therefore satisfying the needs of the Public Sector (General) Equality Duty, but also providing the governance required by our internal audit recommendations.
 - 1.3 The report also detailed the focus for the delivery of equalities for 2023-24 across three areas which align with our nine equality outcomes that were set in 2021.
 1. Driving improved equality outcomes in the Council's workplace environment and labour market.
 2. Positively influencing the design and environment of our schools, town centres, community hubs and service delivery locations
 3. Working with our Community Boards and Champions to improve equality and inclusion in our communities.
 - 1.4 In addition, the report advised that following a desktop review of the current Equality Strategy 2019-2024, and the current programme of activity underway there was no requirement to fully refresh the Equality Strategy at that time.
 - 1.5 This report provides the progress that has been made in the past year since the Delivery Framework for Equalities was implemented and the plans for the year 2024-25.
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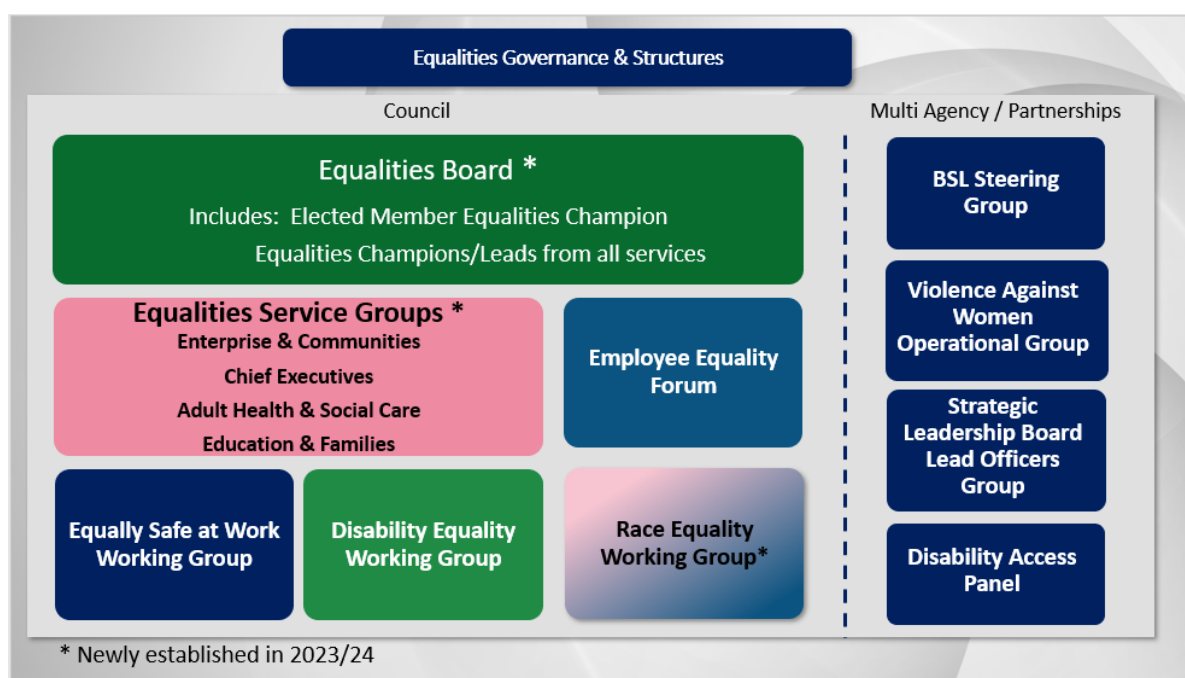
2. Report

The Equalities Board

- 2.1 The Council's Equality Board held its first quarterly meeting in March 2023. The Board is chaired by the Chief Officer (People Resources) and has the following membership:
 - The Council's Equalities Manager
 - Senior managers from each of the Council's service directorates
 - Senior managers of services that have a particular part to play in addressing the disadvantage identified through the work to set our equality outcomes in; and
 - The Council's Elected Members Equality Champion
- 2.2 The Board provides a collective focus on equality work and strengthens overall governance by:
 - Supporting and monitoring the Equalities Delivery Framework through its quarterly meetings.
 - Engaging across services to ensure equality is embedded. Each service directorate now has an equality action plan which is updated on a quarterly basis and discussed at each Equality Board meeting.

- Improving the effectiveness of our Equality Impact Assessment processes and compliance. Our assessment form and guidance was subject of an independent review by the Scottish Women's Budget Group resulting in improved guidance. Undertaking the e-learning module on EqlAs is mandatory for anyone carrying out an EqlA and a yearly review of published assessments will be undertaken by the Board to ensure continuous improvement; and
- Developing a robust performance monitoring framework that will more effectively measure performance and impacts against the equality outcomes. Our equality outcomes performance management framework and all other equality action plans have been brought together into the one corporate document, are SMART and have been subject of a report to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel.

The following illustrates the Council's equalities Governance and Structures.



The Delivery Plan for Equalities 2023-24

- 2.3 The three areas of focus within the Delivery Plan for Equalities have both an internal and external focus and recognise that equality cannot be solely delivered by the Equality team but is the responsibility of all. They are also intrinsically linked to our ambitions within the plan for North Lanarkshire. The following provides some important areas of progress and challenge across the three areas of focus.

Driving improved equality outcomes in the Council's workplace environment and labour market.

- 2.3.1 To drive these improved outcomes we committed to undertake the campaigns and activities in the following areas.

Race at Work Charter

- 2.3.2 The Council signed up to this Charter in 2022 - the only Scottish Local Authority to do so – with the aim of increasing the Council's public commitment to being an employer

of choice for minority ethnic people. This commitment built on the work that began in 2021 with the Member Officer Black Lives Matter Working group and the appointment of the Council's first Executive Sponsor for Race. This position has now been filled by the Council's Chief Social Work Officer. In this time the Council has increased its minority ethnic workforce from 92 in 2021 to 119 in 2023.

While the numbers are still disproportionately low our positive action activities in recruitment is having a really positive impact as is illustrated in the following case study.

Case Study - Positive Action in Recruitment

Following up on a connection from Councillor Khan, the Council's Equalities Champion and our Equality Manager, we became aware of a number of members of the Congolese community, based in Motherwell and the Ukrainian Community, primarily in Coatbridge, who were keen to explore opportunities for work. The Brighter Futures team picked this up with a view to exploring work in the construction industry, however it quickly became clear that the biggest demand was from women, for local, part time roles. Knowing that there were suitable roles available in the Early Years arena the Brighter Future team were able to work with the Council's Recruitment Team, the Education and Families Team and the Resettlement Team to develop these connections and enable the recruitment of 38 members of these communities into permanent Early Learning and Childcare Support Worker posts.

Different Approach / Recruitment Methodology

Traditionally roles within NLC are marketed online via the My Job Scotland portal where candidates apply digitally on an individual basis.

When the team first contacted the Congolese and Ukrainian groups it became apparent that:

- There was no awareness of the types of roles the Council were seeking to recruit and no understanding of the availability of these roles.
- There was no awareness of the My Job Scotland portal.
- Candidates would not have considered proactively applying due to this lack of awareness and due to their lack of digital skills.
- Some candidates were engaging with ESOL classes and levels of confidence varied.
- Candidates did not have an understanding of the portable skills they had which were ideal for the roles.

In adopting an "outreach model," the team were able to address these issues and concerns and support applications in a modified process (fully supported by the NLC Recruitment Team), to encourage as full participation as possible. By going out into the community, into their space, we were able to make use of their safe and comfortable space, explain the roles, discuss, support, and encourage applications, help them to recognise their existing skills and support the physical paper-based process. The assessment centre model was adopted with a more relaxed, person centred approach including interview and workshops to ensure the correct fit for the roles and feedback and signposting to those candidates who needed to develop before becoming suitable for employment.

Evaluation

As the process has only recently concluded there has not yet been formal evaluation of the modified approach and this is planned as future study activity. It is, however, our sense that without this level of outreach activity there would have

been little or no applications from these cohorts, meaning that our nurseries would not benefit from the rich and diverse experiences that these employees will bring.
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Improving Minority Ethnic teacher numbers.

- 2.3.3 In some of our schools we can see that the disproportionate numbers of minority ethnic teachers in comparison to minority ethnic pupil numbers means that some pupils will go through their school life without being taught by anyone who is from the same or similar ethnic background. That has implications for pupils' aspirations and future minority ethnic teacher numbers – you have to see me to be me.

In 2023 Education and Families worked with the Equalities Team to explore what action could be taken to address this. We considered:

- The current teachers who were on permanent supply contracts and the potential to move them to a specific school where minority ethnic pupil numbers were high
- The ethnic diversity of new probationer teachers and the potential for any to be placed within the schools with high rates of minority ethnic pupils.
- The potential to create specific promoted temporary posts in those schools that could have a focus on support and engagement with minority ethnic children and their families.

Unfortunately, due to a number of issues including, legalities and changes in school demographics the focus of the work has changed in the short-term to supporting good practice through participation in the Racial Literacy initiative via Education Scotland and having a greater understanding in schools and clusters of the ethnic make-up, leading to adapting the curriculum and celebrating diversity.

Equally Safe at Work and Disability Confident Leader

- 2.3.4 The Council was one of the first Local Authorities in Scotland to achieve both Bronze Standard in Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) and Leader status in the Disability Confident scheme. Both of these are employer accreditation programmes and the work to ensure we achieve the standards associated with the accreditation is supported by two working groups and action plans. They aim to address workplace gender inequality (ESAW) and disability inequality.

Employee Equality Forum (EEF)

- 2.3.5 The EEF aims to provide a focus for employees to discuss and raise equality and employment matters with the Council. It also acts as a consultation mechanism for the Council when developing employment policies and initiatives.
In 2023 some initiatives the EEF were involved in included:

- Working in partnership with the Disability Confident Leader Working Group to host a very successful disabled employee event to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event welcomed over 30 disabled employees and a number of those signed up to become members of the EEF.
- The developing Sexual Harassment and Menopause and Hormonal Change Policies; and
- Assisting in the development of the second employee survey to explore the experiences of the Council's minority ethnic employees.

Focus on our LGB and T employees.

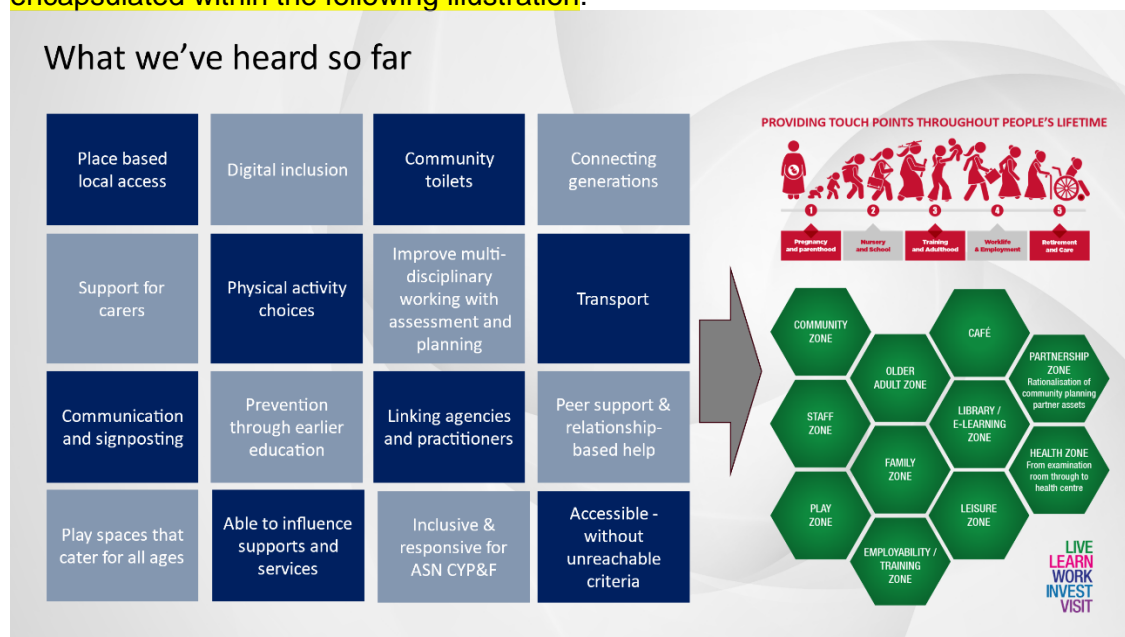
- 2.3.6 We have seen an increase in the number of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees recording their sexual orientation on i-Trent from 0.9% in 20221 to 1.4% in 2023. There are currently no recorded transgender employees. However, anecdotally we know that there are small numbers.
- 2.3.7 With this information we will be working in partnership with our Employee Equality Forum in 2024 to review the support for LGB and T employees.

Positively influencing the design and environment of our schools, town centres, community hubs and service delivery locations.

Operating Delivery Model Team and Equalities Team

- 2.3.8 The community hubs to be touchpoints to support different stages of life, which everyone can access equally is, at the heart of their development. Involving people with different life experiences, to influence the design of the hubs and their operational activity is critical to their accessibility and inclusiveness.
- 2.3.9 To ensure lived experience is at the forefront of the Hub development, from February to December 2023 alone, the following has taken place:
- Co-designing the future hubs with representative organisations including NL Disability Forum, Voice of Experience, Lanarkshire Links, NL Carers Together, and Equals Advocacy through:
 - Approximately 2000 responses to a survey
 - Approximately 300 participants in focus groups over 11 sessions
 - 12 journey maps; and
 - Undertaking an equality impact assessment to inform what a best practice reception area should look like.

The feedback from this community engagement activity has been augmented and is encapsulated within the following illustration.



Lived Experience Voices

- 2.3.10 'Nothing about us without us', as illustrated within the community hub development, entails the genuine involvement of people with lived experience. We work in many different ways to ensure lived experience influences what we do and how we do it. Some examples are provided below.
- 2.3.11 We continue to have a partnership with the Disability Access Panel who provide the Council and its partners with that lived experience of disability in relation to the built environment ensuring that access issues are factored into projects at the design stage.
- 2.3.12 Lanarkshire BSL Steering Group provides a conduit for Deaf and Deafblind BSL users to have an ongoing dialogue with the Council, South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire to improve service delivery for BSL users. The group has representatives from four Deaf and Deafblind BSL user organisations operating in Lanarkshire who have co-produced the second Shared BSL Plan for Lanarkshire which is subject of a separate report to committee.
- 2.3.13 The Our Lives Research which explored the lived experiences of North Lanarkshire's Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic people, has moved to a second phase of feeding back the research findings and recommendations to the different communities. A number of meetings and events have taken place across North Lanarkshire, with the different communities being seen as key partners to developing solutions.
- 2.3.14 Two women's surveys were carried out in December 2023 in partnership with the Council, Licensing Board and the Violence Against Women Partnership to gauge women's experiences of using Motherwell and Coatbridge town centres. These towns were identified by colleagues in Police Scotland as having high incidences of sexual assaults, in comparison with other town centres. With the Town Centre Action Plans being developed it is important that the experiences of women should inform these Plans, not just from a safety perspective. The Growth Team which is driving the Town Centre action plans is currently considering the findings of the surveys. It is intended that similar surveys will be carried out in other town centres across North Lanarkshire to inform future developing Town Centre Action Plans and reviews.

Work with schools on LGB&T supports

- 2.3.15 Increasingly the needs and support for young people who are LGB&T is being highlighted in our schools. Education and Families in 2023 have been engaging with Time for Inclusive Education (TIE), a charity that tackles homophobic, biphobic and transphobic prejudice and bullying through education. The service has committed to train all school leadership teams and representatives from schools to promote LGB&T Inclusive education through whole school curriculum.
- 2.3.16 The schools change of name policy has also been updated to reflect the new Trans Guidance for Schools.

Working with our Community Boards and Champions to improve equality and inclusion within our communities.

Black Lives Matter Campaign

- 2.3.17 Advancing race equality in our communities has been a priority area for the Council over the past few years and remains so. Section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of this report discusses the work in relation to our workplace and schools.

In relation to the community the Strategic Leadership Board is driving the work associated with the Our Lives Research through a Lead Officers Group, ensuring a partnership response to the research findings and recommendations. Working with key community representatives from the different BAME communities, feedback events and meetings have been taking place and strong connections made.

Gender Budgeting – Scottish Women’s Budget Group

2.3.18 The Council’s participation in the Theory into Action project with SWBG has resulted in an increased focus on the need to consider the different needs of women and men when undertaking equality impact assessments of new initiatives and budget decisions. The establishment of the Women’s Business Incubator Hub is one example of where positive action can be taken to address an area of inequality where evidence is substantiated.

2.3.19 The SWBG also held sessions for our Elected Members in the lead up to the 2024/25 budget setting exercise to assist with the decision-making process.

Elected Member Training

2.3.20 The role of Elected Members in advancing the needs of the Public Sector (General) Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations cannot be overstated. In 2017 a Council motion recognised this and made the undertaking of training on the PSED mandatory for Elected Members.

A total of 39 Elected Members have recently participated in An Overview of the Public Sector Equality Duties and the Role of Elected Members - 44 in total since 2022.

Working with the Community Boards through the Community Partnership Team

2.3.21 Reaching seldom heard people and ensuring Community Boards are representative of the local population is a key concern for the Community Boards.

The Community Partnership Team works closely with the Council’s Equality Manager to support engagement and increase representation. Some recent work has included:

- Two sessions took place with equality groups on the Council’s budget setting exercise
- An equalities monitoring exercise has been undertaken on the Community Board and sub-group membership to understand how representative they are and plan for action as necessary; and
- A presentation to the Community Boards on the Our Lives Research findings and what that means for the Community Boards.

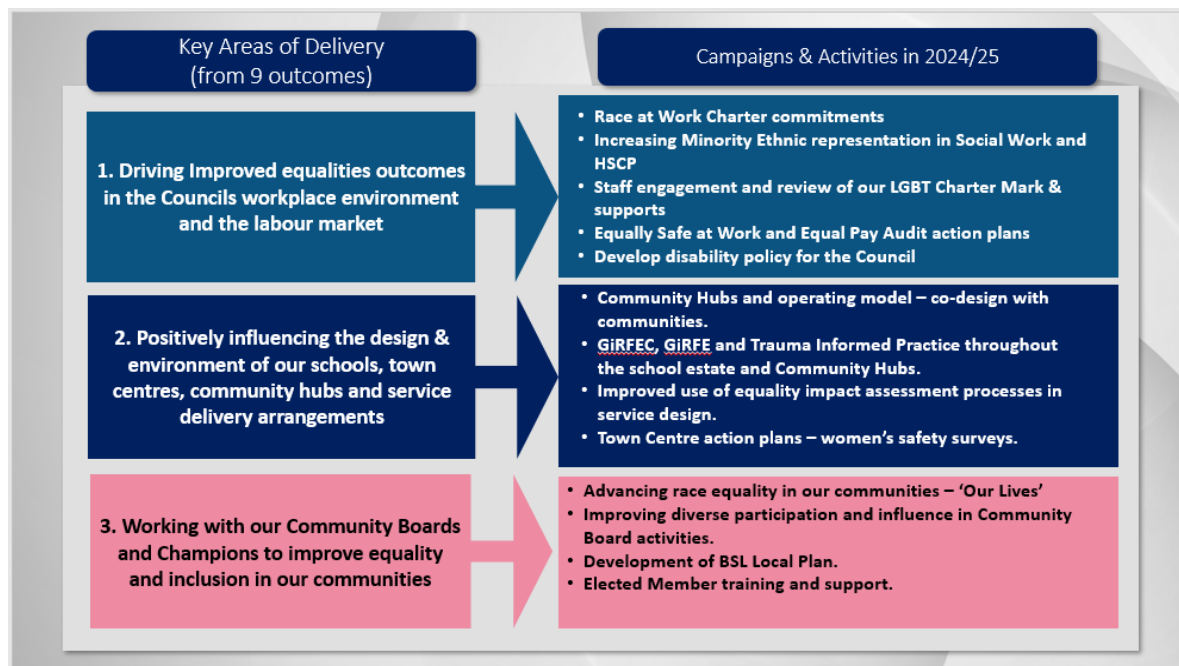
The Delivery Plan for Equalities 2024-25

2.4 The aim of the Equalities Delivery Plan for 2024-25 is to build on the work from 2023-24. However, while the three key areas of delivery for equality will remain the same for the coming year some of the focus of the campaigns and activities will change.

2.5 Some of the change in focus is due to:

- legislative requirements – the development of the BSL Local Plan and associated work for example,
- emerging Council priorities, including trauma informed practice, and
- evidence - the need for greater minority ethnic representation in our Social Work and HSCP workforce as recommended by the Our Lives research findings.

The following diagram sets out the new delivery plan for 204-25.



Equality Strategy and Equality Outcomes Review

- 2.6 The lifespan of the Council's Equality Strategy 2019-2024 is now nearing the end of its current lifespan. In addition, a requirement of the PSED (Specific Duty) is to set equality outcomes every 4 years and our new outcomes are to be in place by 30 April 2025.
- 2.7 The review and development of our new Equality Strategy and equality outcomes will be carried out in tandem and will be aligned to have the same timeframe of 2025-29. The reviews and development will be carried out by the Council's Equality Board with a period of evidence gathering and consultation taking place between April and September 2024. It is the intention that this will also include a consultation with Elected members
- 2.8 The following diagram sets out the timeline for the review and development of both the Equality Strategy and Equality Outcomes 2025-29, as well as the additional reporting duties required to be published by April 30, 2025.

Equality Strategy 2019-2024 and Equality Outcomes 2021-25 Review

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	April 30, 2025
Timeline for Equality Strategy and equality outcomes developed. Draft structure of Equality Strategy developed by sub-group for consideration by Equality Board in April.	Equality Board Meeting 15/4/24 Consider outline structure of the Strategy and timeline.			Equality Board Meeting 18/7/24 First draft of the Strategy and draft outcomes submitted for approval to go out to consultation.			Equality Board Meeting 7/10/24 Final write-up of Strategy and action plan for 2025.	P&S Convener's Meeting Final checks and prepare for	Policy and Strategy Committee 5/12/24	Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 required by PSED to be published alongside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Outcomes 2021-25 – Progress Report Equality Mainstreaming Report Equal Pay Policy Statement Occupational Segregation – occupations and grades Employment gathering information Gender Pay Gap information
	April → June			July → September						
	Data gathering – Census information, research, employee information, surveys, service equality plans and links to PoW, Is Scotland Fairer – Equality Evidence Finder (SG) for areas where local information is scarce. Writing Strategy and development of equality outcomes for submission to Equality Board			Consultation on draft Strategy and draft new / refreshed equality outcomes. Consultees to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations representative of equality groups Community Boards and Community Councils Employee Equality Forum and Diversity Champions Elected Members Trade Unions Strategic Leadership Board 						

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Increase in the number of BAME employees within Social Work and the Health and Social Care Workforce.
- 3.2 LGB&T employees are engaged in improving appropriate supports.
- 3.3 Gender and disability equality is advanced in the workplace.
- 3.4 Our schools, town centres and community hubs are accessible and inclusive.
- 3.5 Our most marginalised communities are engaged in community participation mechanisms.

4. Supporting documentations

Fiona Whittaker

Fiona Whittaker
Chief Officer (People Resources)

5. Impacts

5.1	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland p? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>The work associated with this report advances the three needs of the PSED If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p>Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.3	<p>HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.4	<p>Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Principal Solicitor (Employment) is a member of the Equality Board.</p>
5.5	<p>Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.6	<p>Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7</p>	<p>Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8</p>	<p>Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.9</p>	<p>Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10</p>	<p>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11</p>	<p>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>