

DECISION-MAKER:	COUNCIL
SUBJECT:	Diversity and Inclusion Pledge
DATE OF DECISION:	17 NOVEMBER 2021
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR FITZHENRY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

The report asks the Council to approve the formal adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion Pledge linked to the Equalities Act 2010. The pledge seeks to commit the Council as an employer, as colleagues and community partner to exceed our responsibilities under the legislation and ensure we support all those that work for and with the Council. This is with the goal of being the most diverse and inclusive employer that the Council can be.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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| (i) | Agree to adopt and proactively support the Diversity and Inclusion Pledge. |
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1. | Southampton City Council is one of the largest employers in the City, and commissions and provides services for all of the residents in what is a large and diverse city. As a front facing, significant community supporter, provider and commissioner of services, the Council should have a visible commitment to diversity and inclusion for all. Our responsibilities include being unprejudiced, non-discriminatory in all of our approaches and in all of our processes and practices. We also seek to identify and remove barriers to employment and career development. This is not the responsibility of any one individual, but of each Councillor and every Council employee. |
| 2. | As part of our bid to be the UK City of Culture 2025, engagement has taken place with communities and organisations from across the City in order to shape our bid and frame our ambition going forward. Through the process of bidding for UK City of Culture 2025, the city has been challenged to consider |

	how to improve inclusion so that all members of our society (particularly those from seldom heard communities) feel represented, engaged, and have the same opportunities as any other resident. This includes ensuring we fully reflect the community that we serve.
3.	Levelling up across our city is part of the journey that we are on, to enable and support communities and people to access and make the most of opportunity for personal growth and to thrive, whatever their background. The Council is working closely with key strategic partners such as our Universities, Hampshire Constabulary, health partners, businesses, creative and cultural partners and the community and voluntary sector, supported by the City of Culture bid team, to ensure there is also a city wide conversation and approach to diversity and inclusion that will ensure we create the foundations for levelling up, for years to come.
4.	The Council has also begun its' journey towards becoming a child friendly city, that has a focus on diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. This will incorporate involving children in democratic processes, and engaging them in the design and delivery of policy, strategy, and services.
5.	The Diversity and Inclusion Pledge and associated actions are a way of demonstrating the Council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
6.	To not adopt a pledge. The Council is legally bound to observe the Equalities Act 2010 however the pledge provides commitments over and above the Act demonstrating the Council's commitment to Equalities in all of its functions, services and activities.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
7.	Southampton City Council is one of the largest employers in the city, is an anchor institution and provider of services to all residents. Yet in many ways, the Council is not visibly representative of the communities that we serve and internally, senior leaders received feedback in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the impact of COVID 19, that the organisation needed to focus more attention on being a truly inclusive employer, if it was to have credibility as a leader within a truly inclusive system across the city of Southampton.
8.	The value of diversity as well as the challenges that face some of our communities have been strong themes during the City of Culture consultation. A focus on diversity, inclusion and reducing the inequalities that arise from structural and institutional norms, both within and out with the Council, is therefore a key levelling up ambition for the Council and will be enhanced and supported by our bid to be the UK City of Culture in 2025.
9.	The Council appointed a temporary Diversity and Inclusion Lead within the Human Resources and Organisational Development service in March 2021. A key focus of this role is to develop our Diversity and Inclusion Pledge and articulate associated actions.
10.	The Council has also appointed a Community Cohesion and Diversity Officer, located within a new Community Cohesion Team (Stronger Communities) to ensure that the diverse communities of Southampton are engaged and supported to feel safe, have their say about services and

	issues that affect them, and so that their views and perspectives inform decision making and service delivery.
11.	<p>The Diversity and Inclusion Lead has set up a series of colleague networks around the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010, initially focusing on gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in the Workplace • Beauty in Diversity and Ethnicity (BIDE) and • LGBTQ+. <p>Other colleague networks are being formed too, such as for disability, carers, mental health, and young people; with further engagement taking place with the aim of forming other groups too.</p>
12.	Each of these networks have been consulted on the content of the Diversity and Inclusion pledge and are helping to prioritise actions suggested by over 100 employees who participated in diversity and inclusion engagement events held in early 2021. These actions will be aligned to the pledge and will demonstrate the commitment to it, both in the short and longer term.
13.	A number of partners across the City have also been consulted by the Diversity and Inclusion Lead as part of the system wide approach that we are supporting: Southampton Football Club, Carnival, Southampton Pride, Southampton Solent University, Southampton University, and Balfour Beatty.
14.	It was unanimously agreed by the employee networks that proactive language should be used within the pledge; it should not penalise colleagues for any negative behaviour, but rather it should encourage best practice. The pledge (see Appendix A) therefore uses progressive, productive language and ensures a focus on what can be done, rather than what cannot.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
15.	<p>Having the temporary internal Diversity and Inclusion Lead has enabled the setting up of employee networks, participation in Southampton Pride, creation of the draft pledge, and other related actions. Funding is already in place for this post until 31 March 2022. Between now and March 2022, the Diversity and Inclusion Lead will continue to develop the action plan that will support the pledge.</p> <p>The implementation and delivery of the action plan will be included in a revised Organisational Development (OD) Strategy and plan that will be put forward for agreement in 2022.</p>
<u>Property/Other</u>	
16.	There are no known property or other implications.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
17.	S.149 Equalities Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equalities Duty or 'PSED') requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between persons having protected characteristics and those who have not and foster good relations between those having protected characteristics and those who have not. The

	adoption of a diversity pledge may be undertaken in accordance with the proactive PSED set out above.
Other Legal Implications:	
18.	The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires public bodies to publish their equalities objectives at least every 4 years and further information to demonstrate their compliance with the PSED.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
19.	The main risk to the proposed Diversity and Inclusion Pledge is lacking the capacity to undertake actions associated with it. These are being managed temporarily in 2021/22 and will be a consideration in the revised OD plan thereafter.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
20.	The proposals within the report are entirely consistent with and contribute to the Council's Policy Framework.

KEY DECISION?	N/A
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Appendix A – Southampton City Council Diversity and Inclusion Pledge.
2.	Appendix B – Diversity and Inclusion Pledge Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None