

## **GM LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

SUBJECT: GM LEP Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

DATE: 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020

FROM: Vanda Murray

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### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report sets out the initial thinking on how the LEP could use its private sector experience and expertise to develop an Action Plan to promote greater diversity and inclusion within all the work of the LEP itself, within the private sector, and to add value to wider GM policy development and delivery.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The LEP Board is asked to provide feedback on the report and provide suggestions on the development of the Action Plan.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The GM Local Enterprise Partnership sits at the heart of Greater Manchester's governance arrangements, ensuring that business leaders are empowered to set the strategic course, determine local priorities and drive growth and job creation within the city region working in partnership with GMCA.
- 1.2 As part of this approach, the LEP set out a commitment to diversity that recognises that the Board works on behalf of all the people of Greater Manchester and understands that different people bring different ideas, knowledge and perspectives. The Board appointed Vanda Murray as its Diversity Champion to lead on issues of diversity and inclusion.
- 1.3 At their meeting in July, the Board discussed how the LEP could use its business experience and expertise to promote greater diversity and inclusion within all the work of the LEP itself, the private sector and to add value to wider GM policy development and delivery.
- 1.4 The Board agreed to develop an Action Plan (including both the work of the LEP itself but also linking to the Good Employment Charter) to support employers in boosting diversity. This report sets out the initial thinking on how this could be taken forward and includes a number of ideas to help inform discussion.

## **2. GM GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER**

- 2.1 The LEP has been a consistent supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter which was created to improve employment standards across all GM employers. The Charter is underpinned by principles encouraging equality, diversity and innovation and sets out seven key characteristics of good employment ensuring people are paid fairly for their work, treated appropriately and provided with inclusive opportunity.
- 2.2 The Charter recognises that a diverse workforce which reflects the diverse range of customers, service users and the community in which they are based are more creative, and more innovative. Having a wide range of skills and experience that reflects all of society, including those with disabilities, from varying ethnic backgrounds or offers a balanced gender representation means that businesses are more likely to design products and services for a broader base.
- 2.3 There is also a strong link between gender-balanced organisations and corporate performance. Businesses that fully embrace diversity in all its facets whether a higher ethnic mix or a mix of men and women responsible for leadership positions, do better on measures like return on investment and total shareholder return.
- 2.4 During the COVID-19 pandemic, feedback to the Charter has suggested that existing inequalities have been amplified, not only in terms of employment rights, but also directly in terms of the disproportionate health impacts on BAME and other communities. The Charter has responded with further support on the key themes of Equalities; Secure Work; Flexible Work; Good Management; and Employee Voice.
- 2.5 Initial discussion suggests the LEP could strengthen this approach by sharing their ideas and experience of good practice in diversity and inclusion which could inform the future delivery of the Charter.
- 2.6 A number of key themes have been identified for discussion:

### ***Recruitment***

- Developing work placements with links to universities
- Improving access through graduate trainee schemes

- Promoting competency based recruitment to avoid unconscious bias
- Exploring the role of targets in best practice recruitment approaches (including apprenticeships)
- Reporting of pay gaps and structural differentials across gender, BAME, disability, LGBTQ+ issues are strong tools to change behaviours

#### ***Training and Development***

- Removing barriers to employment and progression through better training and development
- Providing Board shadowing opportunities
- Developing the next generation of leaders through effective succession planning
- Establishing diverse mentorships

#### ***Supply Chains***

- Exploring how supply chains can contribute to an inclusive economy

#### ***Communicating Best Practice and Role Models***

- Publicising commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Promoting positive role models

### **3. OPERATION OF THE LEP BOARD**

- 3.1 As part of its commitment to diversity, the LEP regularly refreshes its board membership to ensure it reflects the breadth of industrial sectors on its Board as well as better represents the diversity of Greater Manchester's people.
- 3.2 As the Board launches its current refresh, there is an opportunity to ensure the LEP is attracting a diverse range of candidates and increasing diversity in its Board moving forward – see separate report at this meeting.
- 3.3 More broadly, it will be useful to explore how the Board can best consider equality and diversity implications in all its decision making, including programmes such as the Local Growth Fund.

### **4. EQUALITIES ADVISORY PANELS**

- 4.1 A Greater Manchester Tackling Inequalities Board is being developed to support and influence the Covid recovery work, and respond to inequalities across Greater Manchester, and bringing together all activity being led across Greater Manchester to respond to inequalities in all their forms, to have greater collaboration, and maximize the impact of the actions being taken. The Board will be chaired by Cllr Brenda Warrington and include Cllr Elise Wilson. The Commission will bring together a range of partners including the GMCA Equalities Advisory Panels and Advisers to shape and inform the city-regions renewal following the pandemic.
- 4.2 Within this overarching approach, there is an opportunity for the LEP to help shape and learn from the work of two panels in particular: the Women and Girls' Equality Panel and the Race Equality Panel.
- i. The Women and Girls' Equality Panel is being established to accelerate gender equality, enabling women and girls to live their best life in Greater Manchester. One of the panel's key aims will be to build greater understanding of disadvantage experienced by women and girls as the economy restarts and rebuilds. Areas of focus may be around female progression into senior roles, disadvantage experienced related to part-time working, specific support for female entrepreneurs, and working with

education and skills systems to ensure greater access and take up of STEM subjects and other growth areas of the economy.

- ii. A GM Race Equality Panel is being developed with an aim of launching in Autumn. Emerging themes include employment and labour market inequalities; educational inequalities (including STEM) and the need to promote positive role models (particularly in leadership positions), engage with the business community, and act as a voice for communities.

4.3 Additional to the establishment of the partnership governance set out above, Greater Manchester is also launching an Independent Inequalities Commission. The Commission will bring together a panel of leading national / international experts in their fields, including population health experts, academics, economists, social policy experts and business leaders. The mission of the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission is to better understand the existing and emerging inequalities, consider how tackling these inequalities should feature in a refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy, and outline the route towards achieving the outcomes of this Strategy.

## **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 The Board is asked to provide feedback on the report and provide suggestions on how the LEP could use its business experience and expertise to promote greater diversity and inclusion within all the work of the LEP itself, within the private sector, and to add value to wider GM policy development and delivery.