



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

# **Diversity and Inclusion Governance**

## **20 June 2022**

### **Reference: LG (2022) Paper 044**

## **Executive summary**

1. This paper sets out a proposal for a governance structure to support the organisation's diversity and inclusion aspirations.

## **Issues and options**

1. The first Diversity & Inclusion Strategy set out the aims of the Organisation's commitment:
  - To have a diverse workforce that reflects modern Scottish society
  - To have an inclusive working environment where all staff are valued and respected
  - To identify and remove any barriers to success
  - To deliver services that are accessible and meet the needs and expectations of the diverse groups who connect with the Parliament
2. At the time this strategy was developed, diversity and inclusion was not explicitly embedded into any other strategies, for example, the session 5 Strategic Plan made no mention of diversity and inclusion.
3. However, as a result of the D&I strategy being developed and the Board and networks being set up, diversity and inclusion began to feature in further iterations of the overall Strategic Plan.
4. This has further evolved. The s6 Strategic Plan sets out what we aim to do through our core activities and there are 4 strategic change objectives. Diversity and Inclusion is woven throughout this so that it is seen as a way of doing things; an 'enabler' rather than something separate. It is important to note that it features explicitly in 3 out of the 4 pillars, not just the pillar dealing with People and Culture.

5. The Public Engagement Strategy has as its focus diversity and inclusion and this is also an integral part of the People and Culture Strategy
6. This is why no further, separate Diversity and Inclusion strategy is being proposed. However, it is important to get the governance right to ensure that we continue to increase diversity and that we demonstrate inclusivity in everything we do.

## **Governance**

7. Having diversity and inclusion embedded in our strategic plan in the way that it is, is a very positive development. There are also a number of good examples of where we have made progress and where it is clear that diversity and inclusion has been incorporated into services and activities. However, we need to continue to monitor progress and drive change. Experience shows that organisational aspirations can potentially be lost where, having mainstreamed the concept of diversity and inclusion, there is no longer specific focus and attention on it.
8. Individual Group Heads are accountable for the operation of their individual groups and in some cases, are accountable for a particular strategy. Diversity and Inclusion is part of everything that is done across the Parliament (as reflected in the s6 Strategic Plan) and therefore no one group or area can or should be solely accountable. That is the role of Leadership Group collectively.
9. If the governance structure is there to ensure we, as an organisation, continue to meet our diversity and inclusion aspirations, how can this be done in a way that achieves this but also ensures clear lines of accountability and clarity over roles and responsibilities?
10. Our view is that there needs to be a challenge function within the governance model. This is needed to ensure we continue to drive change and to challenge ourselves and ensure diversity and inclusion is embedded in everything we do.
11. Such a challenge function should be distinct from Leadership Group. Therefore we propose there should be a separate Board whose role is to provide advice and challenge to Leadership Group.
12. We believe the best model to achieve this (and the need to have clarity around accountability) is by discontinuing the existing Diversity and Inclusion Board and setting up a Board largely comprised of external members. It would be similar, in some ways, to the role performed for the SPCB by the Audit Advisory Board.

13. Having this would allow not only an external perspective on what we do but critically allow us to have more diverse membership so we have more people with the lived experience necessary to challenge us and help us remove barriers.
14. There should be some internal representation on the Board to ensure there is a connection with the Parliament but the balance must be external.
15. The other important people to be taken into account are our diversity networks. The networks have been and continue to be, hugely important in helping us to be more diverse and inclusive. Regardless of decisions taken in terms of the Board, as an organisation we need to look at how we can support and reinvigorate the networks. In governance terms, they were connected into the Diversity and Inclusion Board (through two of their chairs being members and through the vice-chair of the Board being responsible for liaison with the Network chairs forum).
16. It is vitally important that any new governance arrangements do not lose that connection nor undermine the role of the Networks.
17. Taking all of this into account, the intention is for the Head of People Services, Diversity and Inclusion to review the operation of and support to the Networks. If LG agrees to the establishment of a new Board, the outcomes of that review could then be reported and discussed with the Board.
18. There are a number of issues that will need to be explored further, such as how we make sure we have Board members with a range of protected characteristics and still ensure we have an open appointment process, how an internal perspective is included on the Board and, as set out above, the role of the Networks.
19. **LG is being asked whether it agrees with the principle of having a Board as set out in paragraphs 12-14 and if so, to delegate to us the practical arrangements for putting the Board in place and for the Head of People Services, Diversity and Inclusion to review the operation of and support to the Networks, in collaboration with those Networks and their LG sponsors.**

## **Resource implications**

20. Leadership Group is asked to consider whether being a Member of the board would be a remunerated position or not. Our steer is that there should be remuneration on the basis that too often people from protected characteristics are expected to give their time, expertise and experience for free despite continuing to experience and advocate against barriers and disadvantage and we would not want to limit the pool of people who

may be interested in this. For comparative purposes, at the time of writing the daily rate for members of the Audit Advisory Board is £330 (plus covering of necessary expenses).

## **Publication Scheme**

21. This paper can be published.

## **Decision**

22. LG is asked to agree:

- with the principle of having a largely external Board whose role would be to challenge and advise LG on diversity and inclusion.
- To delegate to Lorna and Susan the practical arrangements
- To delegate to Neil a review of the operation of and support to the Networks

**Susan Duffy and Lorna Foreman**

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