

## **Introduction**

This Policy sets out Greater Lincolnshire LEP's commitment to equality and diversity.

Greater Lincolnshire covers a large physical area from the Humber to the Wash, comprising 10 local authorities, 44,000 registered businesses, and numerous non-registered, representing over one million people.

In order to delivery significant growth and productivity gains, we aim to remove all barriers to achieving economic performance , resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities.

Our diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full participation in economic life and progress. The competitive advantage arising from local diversity will be harnessed to drive growth.

Diversity and equality issues impact everyone in the Greater Lincolnshire area and we are committed to removing barriers that might restrict people and we are positively working towards positive change.

## **What is Equality & Diversity?**

Equality is enabling opportunity, access, participation and contribution on a fair and equal footing and ensuring that different groups are not disadvantaged when accessing services, employment or participating in public life in Greater Lincolnshire Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

Diversity is about the individual, understanding that each of us is different and making sure we respect and celebrate the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, value and beliefs, aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

## **Policy Aims**

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that the LEP is clear about equal opportunity and that these are managed in a professional and lawful way.
- Set out the procedures the LEP will implement in relation to equal opportunities management

## Commitment Required

Greater Lincolnshire LEP is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity as a commissioner of services and projects. LCC is the host employer of the workforce, and together, this means doing what we can to positively promote equality and diversity across the delivery of projects, programmes and services and within our workforce.

The Equality Act 2010 places a public duty on LCC and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP with which we must comply. It states that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and places legislation around nine protected characteristics: age, disability (including mental ill health), gender, reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Greater Lincolnshire LEP promotes equality of opportunity and does all it can to ensure that no member of the public, service user, employee, contractor or staff member working within a partner organisation will be unlawfully discriminated against.

The LEP commits to the following in line with the National Assurance Framework and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Assurance Framework:

- Appoint a LEP Board Champion for Equality and Diversity
- Produce a equality and diversity policy statement which will be published and reviewed annually
- Ensure representation at Board and Sub-Board level is reflective of the local business community (including geographies, gender and protected characteristics)
- Produce an annual report to the LEP Board which monitors diversity at board level and sets out the steps the LEP is taking to ensure diversity in its engagement with local communities and businesses. The report should also make suggestions as to how improvements can be made during the year
- A commitment to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of LEP Boards are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023

## Our Procedures

### Employee selection, retention and promotion

Selection for board membership, employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees are employed or on secondment to LCC, as the host organisation. All will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the LEP workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

In commissioning, we will also meet our obligations under the Social Value Act, which requires people who commission, or buy, public services to consider securing added economic, social, environmental and well-being benefits for their local area. We will work with our partners locally to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following principles

- Advancing equality of opportunity for people in our target groups
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

## What will we do?

Greater Lincolnshire LEP will engage with all stakeholders and be inclusive and transparent in all communications. Our priorities and objectives mostly deliver an equality impact, for example, by targeting key sectors, priority groups, and local communities. In addition, we will work with our partners to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following

principles:

- Advancing equality of opportunity;
- Showing our commitment to support women into enterprise and employment;
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We will ensure barriers to equality are being proactively tackled at delivery level and in delivering our equality and diversity policy, we will:

- Assess the impact on equality as we develop our strategies, policies and programmes, and consider what actions, if any, may be appropriate to improve any identified adverse impacts;
- Monitor our social, environmental and economic impact and the impact on equality as we implement our strategies, policies and programmes;
- Be open and transparent and publish all information regarding our progress on achieving equality and diversity;
- Work in partnership with the range of local, regional and national organisations to create new and better actions;
- Provide excellent customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities;
- Promote best practice;
- Endeavour to recruit openly from our community so that the Board reflects regional diversity in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and disability. This measure will be assessed annually and the results produced for the Board;
- Ensure that all members of the Board and all employees have had equality and diversity training;
- Encourage applications from all diverse backgrounds to the Board or employment and we will ensure recruitment literature does not contain barriers to employment.

### **Responsibilities of the LEP Board and the Board Champion**

The ultimate responsibility for our policy rests with the Greater Lincolnshire Board of Directors to ensure that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis. The Board has appointed a Board Champion on Equality and Diversity who will report annually. The role is as follows:-

- Review the current policy statement
- Present an annual report on the progress of the LEP in encouraging diversity and how improvements can be made.
- Produce a diversity statement explaining how the LEP will ensure representation at board and sub-board level which is reflective of the local business community (including geographies, gender and protected characteristics).
- The statement should also set out how the LEP will monitor diversity at board level and explain what steps the LEP is taking to ensure diversity in its engagement with local communities and local businesses.
- The diversity statement should include a commitment to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of LEP boards are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023.

The Diversity Champion will:-

- Champion diversity and the effects of discrimination at the Board Level
- Identify areas in which the LEP can improve its efforts to be more inclusive.

- Actively promote, celebrate and raise awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- Deal with queries as appropriate and take any equality matters to the LEP Directors Board.

The Chief Executive of the LEP will:-

- Feedback information on current Equality and Diversity legislation and guidance to the LEP Director /Board as relevant.
- Support and encourage engagement in all equality initiatives.
- Share and promote best practice.
- Support the Diversity Champion in the role
- Foster good relationships between all LEP boards, staff and stakeholders through events or training and ensure staff and boards are aware of their EDI responsibilities.

The LEP is responsible and accountable for the implementation of this policy and accompanying policies, both inside and outside the organisation, and for ensuring we fulfil our role in addressing diversity issues by promotion of this policy.

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP Board and team members will be made aware of their responsibility to challenge any unfair discrimination for reasons covered by equalities legislation. This policy will be reviewed every year and any recommendations and changes are to be agreed by the Board.

Current Appointments :	Board Champion :	Dean Father, Director
Name of Person responsible:		Ruth Carver Chief Executive
Greater Lincolnshire LEP Board Agreed:		Version March 2019
Effective Date of Policy:		March 2019

<b>Policy 2: Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b> March 2019
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<b>Policy Lead Officer:</b> Ruth Carver