



Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 January 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)

Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Estimated Timescale for Completion

Date to be Completed	4 February 2025
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Budgetary Considerations

Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	n/a
Capital/Revenue	n/a
Code	n/a
Staffing Costs	n/a

Legal Considerations

Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

2.0 Sharon McNicholl, Chair, Equality and Diversity Group correspondence dated 16 December 2024 (copy attached) (Diversity Ambassador Network Terms of Reference Attached)

2.1 Re: Equality and Diversity in Local Councils - Diversity Ambassador Network

2.2 Correspondence has been received advising the Equality and Diversity Group identified a key implementation initiative: establishing a network of Diversity Ambassadors to actively advance the equality and diversity agenda within Councils. From October 2023 to November 2024, a series of best practice events and information sessions took place, consisting of five sessions, offering Diversity Ambassadors opportunities to exchange insights and engage with subject experts.

2.3 Looking ahead, the initiative aims to formalise a Diversity Ambassador Network to sustain collaboration, learning, and the sharing of best practices across Councils. It is proposed that the network will convene every four months, and the purpose of the Network will be reviewed annually.

2.4 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Diversity Ambassadors are Councillor McShane (SF) and Elaine McConaghie, Policy Officer.

2.5 Diversity Ambassador Network Terms of Reference are enclosed.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee note the Correspondence from Sharon McNicholl, Chair, Equality and Diversity Group, and Diversity Ambassador Network Terms of Reference.



Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils

16 December 2024

David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Dear David

Equality and Diversity in Local Councils
Diversity Ambassador Network

The Local Government Equality and Diversity Group prioritises and influences equality, good relations, diversity and inclusion initiatives across local government in Northern Ireland. The Group attempts to bring together best practice across the sector and in so doing, seeks to integrate the priorities of the Group with the ongoing work of individual Councils.

The Group identified a key implementation initiative: establishing a network of Diversity Ambassadors to actively advance the equality and diversity agenda within Councils. From October 2023 to November 2024, a series of best practice events and information sessions took place, consisting of five sessions, offering Diversity Ambassadors opportunities to exchange insights and engage with subject experts.

These sessions were facilitated by the Commission and supported by Equality and Diversity Group members Bronagh Hinds (DemocraShe) and Bernie Kelly (Vice Chair of the Commission).

Looking ahead, the initiative aims to formalise a Diversity Ambassador Network to sustain collaboration, learning, and the sharing of best practices across Councils. It is proposed that the network will convene every four months, and the purpose of the Network will be reviewed annually.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Diversity Ambassadors are:

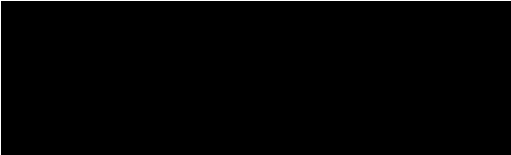
Elected Member
Councillor Cara McShane
Officer
Elaine McConaghie Policy Officer

I attach the Diversity Ambassador Network Terms of Reference and would ask that it is included on the agenda for your Council or appropriate Committee meeting.

On behalf of the Equality and Diversity Group, I would like to thank your Council for its continued support for the Diversity Ambassadors.

If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Paula Hamilton by telephone on 028 9031 3200 or via email on paula.hamilton@lgsc.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon McNicholl
Chair, Equality and Diversity Group

Enc.
Terms of Reference



Equality & Diversity in Local Councils

Diversity Ambassador Network – Terms of Reference

Context

Local Government has an important role in promoting equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. The regional Equality and Diversity Group has responsibility for the development of the overall strategic direction for equality and diversity initiatives in local government. A key feature of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group is the establishment of the Diversity Ambassadors' Network.

Vision for Local Government

To create a fully inclusive and diverse local government service where the workforce reflects the community it serves, where as a sector diversity and inclusion are recognised, supported, and celebrated, and where staff are comfortable to be authentically themselves in the workplace.

Objectives and Delivery

The objective of the Network will be to support Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassadors. Diversity Ambassadors will be supported to champion diversity and inclusion in their councils to create positive impacts on this agenda in services and local communities, specifically to:

- Continue to build capacity for Diversity Ambassadors
- Promote and encourage EDI agendas in individual councils including at Elected Member level, linking to the EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2027
- To assist councils to improve cross departmental working within councils, (across Good Relations, Human Resources and Equality)
- To assist collaborative working across all 11 councils

The delivery of these objectives will be done by creating a forum for Diversity Ambassadors to gather and share best practice, engage with the work of others on this agenda, develop skills to support and influence innovative practices, and embrace the opportunity to work in collaboration with existing and new partners in the delivery of this programme of work.

Operational Arrangements

The Network will meet at least three times a year and will work in the following ways:

- Members of the Network are encouraged to suggest items for the agenda and to suggest expert speakers and key stakeholders to contribute to the Network
- Non-members may be invited to join the Network, permanently or temporarily, to aid discussions on topics
- Decisions will be made by consensus, but if that is not possible the Co- Chairs will make the final decision
- Diversity Ambassadors are expected to attend, and apologies should be given in advance where possible
- Hybrid Meetings will be offered with at least 1 meeting per year, in person only.

Membership

The Network will consist of the nominated council and NILGA Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassadors.

Chairing of the Network Meetings

The Network will be Co-Chaired by an Elected Member and Officer Diversity Ambassador. The Co-Chairs will ensure that the proper running of meetings in a timely, fair transparent and inclusive manner and will have the final say on the finalisation of minutes. Items on the agenda should be alternated between the Co-Chairs.

Location of meetings are to be rotated around each council area.

Accountability

The Co-Chairs be expected to report regularly to the regional Equality and Diversity Group on the work of the Network either verbally or through reports.

Secretariat

The Local Government Staff Commission will serve as the secretariat for the Network until 31 March 2026. From that point onward, the hosting council of each meeting will assume the secretariat role for the respective meeting.

Network Values

Members of the Network will:

- Treat all other Members with respect
- Act in a courteous and ethical manner at all times,
- Improve communication on and within Network
- Not disclose any matter that the Network is satisfied should remain confidential.

Review

The Network will review the relevance and value of the terms of reference and its work on a regular basis.

Co-Chair Role

- Both should be treated as equal in the role, Officer and Elected Member
- Co-Chairs should remain in place for at least 1 year
- Schedule of meetings to be approved at least 1 year in advance
- Meetings which are being held every 4 months should be hosted by a different council. Practical issues for the host council include ensuring ICT and accessibility are appropriate and hospitality is agreed with Co-Chair
- Pre-meetings should take place 2 weeks in advance of the meeting to agree the agenda items and liaise with secretariat
- The Co-Chair should make space for diverse viewpoints to be heard and support challenging discussions
- The Co-Chair should agree and track actions, communicating outcomes either prior to or the following meeting dependant on their urgency
- The Elected Member Co-Chair is encouraged to contact other Elected Member to encourage participation.