Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

1.   Introduction

Across Autumn 2020 and early 2021 the Council engaged with a range of stakeholders to understand how we can strengthen our approach to Diversity and Inclusion. That engagement involved:

- Staff and Union workshops
- Community Stakeholder and Members' workshops

In total, over 70+ staff, trade unions, community stakeholders and Members participated in the workshops. Findings from the sessions are outlined below.

2. Staff and Trade Union workshops

To facilitate the staff and Trade Union workshops SCC commissioned an independent organisation, with a specialism in diversity and inclusion - EA Inclusion.

They proposed five priority recommendations from the workshops:
- Recruitment – attendees spoke about how they would like SCC to find new and innovative ways to recruit and encourage talent to work within the organisation.
- Communication – attendees suggested that engagement with people and groups from the community was key to improve diversity and inclusion and wanted honest and open communication.
- Training – attendees would like formal training on diversity and inclusion, including training on how to recruit diversely and inclusively, which should be underpinned with measurements of impact.
- Raising Awareness – attendees suggested a mentoring scheme which would help raise awareness of protected characteristics and improve progression.
- Celebrating Differences – it was felt that celebrating differences was a good thing and attendees noted the desktop backgrounds that focused on days of cultural or religious significance as a positive contribution.

3. Community Stakeholders and Members' workshops

The workshops were guided around two questions:
- How well do you currently feel the County Council addresses inclusion and diversity?
- What are your ideas on what more we could do to be more inclusive and diverse?

The key themes that came from engagement with Community Stakeholders were:

Community engagement:
- Attendees identified engagement with young people, minority groups and other disadvantaged groups as crucial.

- It was suggested that joint working with other public sector groups, e.g. NHS, Districts/Boroughs would strengthen the Council's current approach.
- The VCSE sector was acknowledged as playing an important role in supporting EDI.

Representation
- The importance of highlighting diversity through the Staffordshire Place branding project was highlighted.
- The need for development of the Council's EDI webpages was highlighted.

Training
- Need to develop and improve the quality of the Council's EDI training.

The key themes that came from engagement with Members were:

Recruitment
- It was identified that there was a need for better representation for people with protected characteristics, including young people within the workforce, particularly in front-facing roles.
- It was felt that barriers to recruitment (such as advertising internal only) could be reduced to attract diverse talent to the organisation.

Engagement
- It was recognised that engagement with minority communities should not be limited to a particular level of community representatives, and any engagement should be culturally sensitive.
- Members identified value in learning from others in the public and private sectors.

Anti-discrimination
- A robust Code of Conduct and reporting process for Members and workforce is crucial, in the context of discriminatory experiences.

Training
- Mandatory inclusion and diversity training for both Members and staff was suggested.

4. **Conclusion**

Feedback from the initial stakeholder workshops has been incorporated into the proposed Diversity and Inclusion Principles, Objectives and Action Plan. The four Objectives for 2021-2023 relate directly to:
- Recruitment
- Training
- Communication and engagement
- Raising awareness and celebrating

The Action Plan will continue to evolve and develop over time as we continue to engage and collaborate with stakeholders.