



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Inclusion, Equity, and Indigenous Initiatives
Report Number: COU24-080
Attachments: FINAL- Diversity Equity and Inclusion Internal Policy [June 2024]

Title: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Objective: To advise Council of this new administrative policy for information and awareness.

Background: The City of Stratford is committed to advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) across all facets of its operations, aiming to create a fair, inclusive, and equitable environment for all employees, council members, contractors, and volunteers. This policy ensures that DEI principles are embedded in every aspect of the City's operations, from internal procedures to public engagement. The City is dedicated to fostering an inclusive workplace, where equity-deserving staff, including those facing barriers due to discrimination and bias, feel valued and supported. This commitment extends to interactions with the public, aiming to ensure equitable service delivery to all community members.

The DEI policy aims to achieve several key objectives. Firstly, it focuses on educating the workforce by providing continuous and systematic training opportunities on DEI topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competence, anti-racism, indigeneity, and other dimensions of DEI that emerge from the community and internal priorities. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive practices, offering training to effectively engage with diverse communities, respect cultural norms, and ensure the accessibility of city services. Secondly, the policy guides and examines work processes through equity impact assessments, which evaluate the impact of policies and programs on marginalized communities to ensure fairness and inclusivity. It also emphasizes the regular review of physical spaces, digital platforms, internal procedures or practices and communication methods to remove barriers hindering access for individuals with marginalized groups. Finally, the policy promotes a cultural shift to prioritize equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism by integrating DEI values into decision-making processes, modeling inclusive behaviors, and setting clear objectives to foster diversity and inclusivity. It encourages community engagement through open dialogues to understand and address DEI-related needs, collaborating with community

organizations to co-create initiatives, and ensuring that all decision-making processes incorporate equity considerations, including budget allocation and policy formulation. By making small shifts towards a culture change this policy ensures that principles related to DEI are continuously, thoughtfully, and systematically engaged with at various levels and in various projects at the City of Stratford.

The City believes that establishing a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace is the collective responsibility of every member within the organization. To uphold this commitment, all staff will use an equity lens to regular progress assessments and transparent reporting mechanisms. Fostering a culture that values and celebrates diversity is paramount, empowering individuals to voice their perspectives and actively contribute to the City's shared dedication to equity and inclusion. While the primary focus of roles and responsibilities lies with staff and management, all councillors, contractors, volunteers, and other community members are expected to adhere to internal procedures in their interactions with the City. It falls upon staff and management to ensure that an appropriate framework is established that supports all internal procedures related to equity, thereby ensuring consistency and accountability throughout the organization. Management responsibilities encompass ensuring employment decisions are free from discrimination, setting individual DEI goals, mitigating unconscious bias in employment practices, and cultivating a safe work environment that upholds DEI values. Employees are expected to engage in continuous DEI learning, respect the diversity of all individuals, contribute to creating an inclusive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying, and proactively working towards fostering diversity and inclusivity within their teams by setting DEI goals, subject to manager approval.

The DEI policy underscores our commitment to nurturing an inclusive and equitable environment within our community. By embedding DEI principles into our daily operations, our aim is to forge a future where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully. This policy is pivotal as it signifies our dedication to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion across both our community and organization. While the DEI division will serve as a critical advisor, consultant, and feedback provider, the responsibility rests with each of us to conscientiously craft policies and programs that integrate equity into our decision-making and everyday practices. Through our collective efforts, we will foster a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone can thrive, in alignment with our mission to empower the community with services promoting care, well-being, resilience, and environmental sustainability, and our vision of a flourishing city driven by inclusive growth and innovation.

Analysis: The DEI policy embodies our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment within our community. By continuously, thoughtfully, and systematically integrating DEI principles into our daily practices, we aim to create a city where every individual is valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully. This policy is crucial first steps as it reflects our intention to improve the culture where

we promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within both our community and organization. The DEI department will play a pivotal role in advising, consulting, and providing feedback. However, it is incumbent upon all of us to thoughtfully develop policies and programs that embed equity into our decision-making processes and everyday practices. Our collective efforts in this endeavor will ensure that we build a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, aligned with our mission to build community partnerships to empower the community with services that promote care, well-being, resilience, and environmental sustainability, and our vision of a flourishing city driven by inclusive growth and innovation in all aspects of our operation.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget: There is no financial impact to this current year operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget: Any future year impacts related to the DEI Policy will be included in the annual operating/capital budget submissions for Council consideration.

Legal considerations: The DEI Policy will be administered in accordance with the City's obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), Occupation Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), all collective legislation and related policies and procedures.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Thoughtfully Develop Our City

- Work Together for Greater Impact
- Intentionally Change to Support the Future

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy" (COU24-080), be received for information.

Prepared by: Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Inclusion, Equity, and Indigenous Initiatives
Recommended by: Dave Bush, Director of Human Resources
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer