

## **North East Joint Transport Committee, Tyne and Wear Sub-Committee**

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**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
**Subject:** Draft Nexus Equality and Diversity Strategy  
**Report of:** Proper Officer for Transport.

### **Executive Summary**

Nexus, as a public authority and the owner and operator of the Tyne and Wear Metro, has a series of obligations and duties set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

As a service provider Nexus is committed to providing the best, simplest and easiest to access service to all its customers, we want public transport and Metro in particular to be the transport mode of choice for all society.

Nexus also seeks to be an organisation that represents the communities we serve throughout Tyne and Wear and across the North East.

In order to achieve this Nexus is in the process of revising its Equality and Diversity Strategy to ensure that equality and accessibility is embedded in our projects, services and the decisions it takes.

The strategy sets out a series of actions to:

- Train and upskill our staff
- Embed equality in the culture of the organisation
- Engage with the local community
- Improve the accessibility of all the services which we offer
- Ensure our workforce is representative of our communities

To ensure that accessibility is our first thought so that everyone who uses public transport feels confident and safe and can access all our services and facilities.

The purpose of this report is to give the Committee an overview of the refreshed strategy.

### **Recommendations**

The North East Joint Transport Committee, Tyne and Wear Sub-Committee is recommended to note the report.

## 1. Background Information

1.1 This strategy will implement a new direction for equality and diversity at Nexus and Metro Services, moving from what is currently considered a specialist area to something for which every member of staff takes responsibility, embedding equality and diversity, including inclusion, into our corporate practices.

1.2 Nexus is committed to providing the best, simplest and easiest to access service to all its customers, we want public transport and Metro in particular to be the transport mode of choice for all of society.

1.3 Nexus also seeks to be an organisation that represents the communities we serve throughout Tyne and Wear and across the North East.

1.4 The vision for the strategy is:

“Nexus will ensure that everyone can access the full range of public transport services and facilities and feels safe, confident and welcome when travelling around the region.”

We want everyone to feel confident and safe on public transport and ensure that public transport is accessible for all. Accessibility should be our first thought in projects, services design and the decisions we take and we will work to ensure our workforce is representative of the communities we serve.

1.5 The strategy objectives are:

- Ensure that staff understand the organisation’s responsibilities and their role in advancing the equality and diversity agenda as part of their everyday activities. Measured through the staff survey, annual surveys and objectives set through the Nexus appraisal process.
- Ensure all staff receive equality and diversity training appropriate to their job roles, measured through delivery against the training plan.
- Ensure all projects, strategies, policies and decisions adequately consider equality and diversity implications throughout their development, measured through an audit of completed impact assessments.
- Ensure all Nexus assets [physical, electronic and information] meet minimum accessibility requirements and plans are in place to continually improve. Measure through delivery against the asset accessibility audit action plans.
- Ensure effective engagement with local community groups, stakeholders and customers and ensure knowledge is disseminated throughout the business to ensure that meaningful actions can be developed and implemented.

1.6 The strategy recommendations are:

### Priority 1

- Establish an organisation-wide strategic approach to E&D training based on an E&D competency framework

- Develop an online app-based E&D resource and invest in tablets for frontline staff
- Improve the equality impact assessment process
- Further integrate the impact assessment process into the project management procedures
- Develop integrated accessibility guidance documents which include accessibility audits and recommendations
- Pilot a programme of work experience, placements and student projects
- Prepare for Ethnic and Disability pay gap reporting
- Prepare action plans for gender, ethnic and disability pay gap results to narrow the gaps
- Identify and SLT sponsor for Equality and Diversity

#### Priority 2

- Audit compliance with the impact assessment process
- Create a central repository of data and intelligence relating to E&D
- Formalise the Equality and Diversity working group remit with clear terms of reference
- Formalise a programme of work experience, placements and student projects across the full range of Nexus activities
- Implement the recommendations of the employee engagement group on improving the diversity of the workplace
- Establish regular Graduate and apprentice programmes based on business need

#### Priority 3

- Set mandatory E&D objectives through the MPDR process
- Provide briefing notes on E&D issues for line managers to disseminate
- Require a mandatory E&D question to be asked at all recruitment interviews
- Increase the use of video, images in information and roll out the use of text messaging and WhatsApp
- Ensure our workplaces are as accessible as possible.

## **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the strategy is adopted by Nexus Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and implemented through the Corporate Business Plan. Delivery against the strategy will be monitored by SLT and the senior sponsor for Equality and Diversity.

## **3. Reasons for the Proposals**

- 3.1 The proposals aim to ensure that equality and accessibility is embedded into Nexus' operations to improve accessibility of our facilities and services for all customers and ensure Nexus continues to meet and where possible exceed its

obligations set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

- 3.2 The strategy also aims to ensure that Nexus is representative of the communities that it serves.

#### **4. Alternative Options Available**

- 4.1 The sub-committee could instruct Nexus to take a different approach.

#### **5. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation**

- 5.1 The Strategy once approved by Nexus SLT will be embedded into the Corporate Business Plan and implemented over the next three years. At this point the strategy will be refreshed.

#### **6. Potential Impact on Objectives**

- 6.1 The strategy supports the delivery of objectives around growing the use of public transport through ensuring that all members of society can access and feel confident in using public transport within Tyne and Wear.

#### **7. Financial and Other Resources Implications**

- 7.1 There are resource implications in implements the actions set out in the strategy. These will be managed through the Nexus Corporate Business Plan and budget setting process.
- 7.2 The Business Plan and associated budget will be brought to TWSC for approval.
- 7.3 Many of the recommendations in the strategy will require staff to be released to undertake activities such as learning and development and managers will have an increased responsibility to disseminate equality information that is relevant to their teams. Project managers will be required to undertake additional steps to ensure that accessibility is embedded into projects.

#### **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The strategy assists Nexus in meeting its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

#### **9. Key Risks**

- 9.1 The main risk is that budgetary constraints hamper Nexus' ability to undertake the depth and breadth of learning and development required to implement the recommendations set out in the strategy and that Nexus are unable to secure the funding required to ensure that all facilities and services are fully accessible.
- 9.2 This risk will be addressed through the Corporate Business Planning and Budget setting process which balances the competing demands on Nexus' resources against its aspirations. Nexus will also continue to seek additional sources of funding to improve its assets.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 The development and implementation of the strategy supports the improvement of the accessibility and attractiveness of public transport to all sections of society.

## **11. Crime and Disorder**

- 11.1 There are specific actions within the strategy which aim to address hate crime on public transport as well as supporting the fostering of relationships between people with protected characteristics and wider society.

## **12. Consultation/Engagement**

- 12.1 The draft strategy has been developed through internal consultation with all sections of Nexus and Metro to identify the barriers to accessibility and inclusion and seek to address them.
- 12.2 The strategy builds on market research, customer feedback and best practice from elsewhere which can be applied to Nexus and Metro services.
- 12.3 The strategy sets out specific actions to enhance community engagement and develop systems and processes to ensure this knowledge is disseminated across the business and embedded into decision making.

## **13. Other Impact of the Proposals**

- 13.1 The proposals aim to grow the use of public transport directly supporting the economy, each additional journey on Metro is worth £8.50 to the local economy.
- 13.2 Additional journeys on public transport help to reduce car journeys on the region's road network helping to improve air quality.

## **14. Appendices**

- 14.1 Equality and Diversity Strategy - Presentation

## **15. Background Papers**

- 15.1 None

## **16. Contact Officers**

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**17. Sign off**

- The Proper Officer for Transport: ✓
- Head of Paid Service: ✓
- Monitoring Officer: ✓
- Chief Finance Officer: ✓

**18. Glossary**