

Subject:	Progress Report on the Workforce Equalities Action Plan		
Date of Meeting:	9 June 2016		
Report of:	Executive Director for Finance & Resources		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The focus of this report is to update on how the council is performing against its Workforce Equalities Action Plan.
- 1.2 Three years ago, Policy & Resources Committee members agreed a high-level Workforce Equalities Action Plan (WEAP) to address the findings from a council commissioned assessment of race equality in employment at the council carried out by the consultants, Global HPO.
- 1.3 Most findings from the Global HPO consultants can be grouped under two central themes:
 - the experiences of BME employees being closely linked to the council's workplace culture and
 - the need to improve analysis of recruitment and workforce data to identify the equality and diversity issues that needed to be addressed
- 1.4 The first two years of the WEAP therefore focussed on these.
- 1.5 The focus of Year 3 has been to develop and implement targeted actions aimed at increasing the diversity of the council's workforce.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to brief Members on the progress the council has made against the Year 3 Action Plan and to seek approval for the areas of focus that will inform the work programme for Year 4.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the progress made against the Year 3 Action Plan, as summarised in paragraph 3.7 and set out in more detail in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Approve the areas of focus that will inform the Year 4 Workforce Equalities Action Plan.

2.3 Gives the Executive Director of Finance & Resources delegated authority to sign off the Action Plan once it has been developed in conjunction with the Workforce Equalities Group.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The council's WEAP is an integral to the Corporate Plan, the modernisation agenda and the associated culture change programme. .



3.2 In the last two years, the council has prioritised a set of organisational Values and improving its analysis and understanding of its workforce data. During this time :

- 900 trained managers on a values-based management development programme, the aim of which was to build a more inclusive culture by adopting consistent, respectful and fair management practices.
- The council has also identified better equality patterns and trends within the workforce in the context of the economically active population within the City.

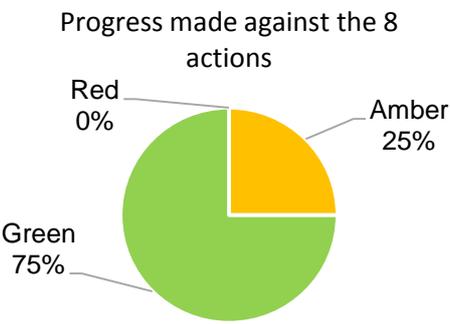
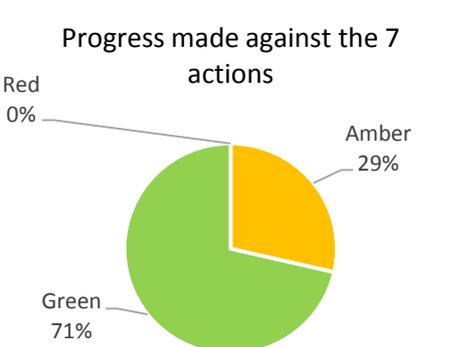
3.3 Without this ground work, the council would not have been in the position to identify specific actions in Year 3 of the WEAP.

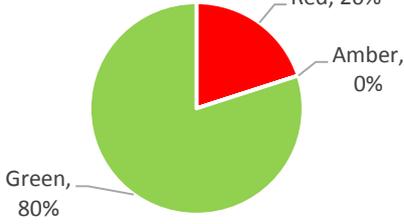
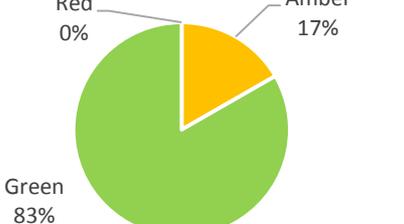
3.4 These were developed and prioritised in close collaboration with members of the Workforce Equalities Group *(WEG) and approved by Policy & Resources Committee in July 2015. At the same meeting, Members also approved an extension to the WEAP for a further period of four years in line with the life of the council's existing Corporate Plan.

** The WEG is chaired by the Head of HR&OD and comprises representatives from the four Staff Workers' Forums, Trade Unions, HR&OD and the Communities, Equality & Third Sector team.*

Progress made against the Year 3 Action Pan

- 3.5 It has been a challenge over the last year to achieve measurable and tangible outcomes in terms of the diversity of the council’s workforce, particularly for those from a BME background. Achieving real cultural change takes time and, there is still work to do to improve equality outcomes for staff.
- 3.6 As in previous years, the WEG provided a place for challenge on the council’s progress towards implementing the Action Plan.
- 3.7 A high-level overview of the progress made against this year’s work programme is shown below. A more detailed description of the work undertaken is set out in Appendix 1.

Workforce Data & Analysis	Recruitment & Retention																
<p>Overall Objective: To capture more extensive and better quality workforce and recruitment data for use by ELT, DMTs, DEGs and service areas so the council can take action to promote positive trends and tackle areas requiring improvement</p> <p>Overall RAG Rating: Green</p>	<p>Overall Objective: To work with different communities of interest/identity across the City to increase their confidence in seeking employment with the council and creating a working environment that will encourage them to stay and to enable them to fulfil their potential</p> <p>Overall RAG Rating: Green</p>																
<p>Progress made against the 8 actions</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Progress against 8 actions</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Green	75%	Amber	25%	Red	0%	<p>Progress made against the 7 actions</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Progress against 7 actions</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Green	71%	Amber	29%	Red	0%
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<p>Workforce Development & Employee Engagement</p>	<p>Policies</p>																

<p>Overall Objective:</p> <p>To equip managers, staff and councillors to better understand diversity and their role in promoting equality through a comprehensive high-quality programme of learning and development that all staff have access to that is mandatory as appropriate</p> <p>Overall RAG Rating: Amber</p>	<p>Overall Objective:</p> <p>To ensure that the council has a comprehensive framework of HR&OD policies and procedures that through regular reviews including the use of EIAs continue to reflect legislation and best practice</p> <p>Overall RAG Rating: Green</p>																
<p>Progress made against the 5 actions</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Green	80%	Red	20%	Amber	0%	<p>Progress made against the 6 actions</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>83%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Green	83%	Amber	17%	Red	0%
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3.8 One area of concern is the slow progress towards completing the review of the equality and diversity e-learning and skills workshops offered to staff. Two new skills workshops (“Equality & Diversity in the Workplace” and “The Confidence to Challenge”) have been piloted this year and the overall feedback has been largely positive.

3.9 A significant amount of work this year has centred on identifying and removing potential barriers to employment for groups under-represented in our workforce, particularly individuals from BME communities. This work was made possible by the improvements we had made in analysing our recruitment data and the feedback we have received from our Workers’ Forums, in particular the BME Workers’ Forum, and the engagement exercise we undertook with local BME communities during the Winter of 2015.

3.10 As a result, we have made a number of changes to our recruitment and selection processes including:-

- amending our application form to make it less onerous to complete
- providing examples of completed application forms to illustrate to applicants how to complete the key knowledge, skills and experience section of the form to maximise their chances of being shortlisted
- reducing the number of criteria applicants need to compete at the application stage by indicating on person specifications at which stage of the recruitment and selection process each criterion will be assessed

- adding the council's Values and associated behaviours to person specifications
- including a standard positive action statement in all job vacancies
- undertaking positive action initiatives as part of specific recruitment campaigns – for example in the recent exercise to recruit a large number of newly-qualified social workers. Encouragingly, this positive action initiative resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of BME applicants compared with the last time these roles were advertised in 2015 (25.56% compared with 12.24%). A similar approach will also be used when we come to recruit to the new Executive Director posts
- reviewing the council's recruitment and selection training offer to improve decision-making
- reviewing our recruitment and selection policy to ensure council vacancies are advertised to as wide and diverse a pool of suitable candidates as practicable and those on recruitment panels are suitably trained. It is planned to present the proposed new policy to P&R Committee at its meeting in July 2016.

3.11 The other main area of work this year has been supporting the transition to a more inclusive workplace culture through the development of a new competency framework for council managers.

3.12 Although the results of our recent staff survey show that the council's Values are well embedded across the organisation, an effective performance management framework that places as much emphasis on how managers go about their work as on what they achieve is essential to achieve lasting change.

3.13 Being able to hold managers accountable through this competency framework should deliver a truly inclusive workplace culture in which everyone is treated with respect and can flourish to realise their full potential.

Areas of focus for Year 4 Action Plan

3.14 We are clear that we must deliver tangible equality outcomes for the organisation. In view of this, it would be more appropriate to change the structure and emphasis of the Plan away from specifying planned work activities in great detail, to one which focusses on the outcomes it aims to deliver. The success of the work undertaken would then be assessed by comparing recruitment and workforce data metrics with those at the end of next year.

3.15 The areas of focus for Year 4 have been identified from feedback via the following sources:

- Workforce Equalities Group
- Member feedback on the Annual Equalities Report
- Staff Survey
- Standards set out in the Equalities Framework for Local Government and the feedback from the Peer review.

3.16 The recommended areas of focus are:

- The use of workforce information and insight to develop areas for positive action activity and to monitor the effectiveness of this activity through established monitoring mechanisms
- Improving recruitment branding and customer experience to be more inclusive
- Strengthening collaboration with communities in Brighton and Hove
- Development of a pathway for positive action apprenticeships and placements
- Improving feedback and communication on positive role modelling within the council
- Underpinning practice with effective learning, reflection and a robust policy framework.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are no alternative options for the Committee to consider. The council has already given a commitment to implementing the recommendations set out in the Global HPO report via its Workforce Equalities Action Plan 2013-2019. This Action Plan is an integral part of the council's Corporate Plan for 2015-19 and forms a key part of the organisation's modernisation agenda.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The content of this report has been discussed fully with members of the Workforce Equalities Group. The representatives from the Workers' Forums and Trade Unions who sit on this group have provided the following joint statement in relation to the work carried out so far:

"The Joint Fora is committed to working with Brighton and Hove City Council to support the organisation in making real and sustainable improvements as it undertakes the necessary changes to bring about full equality in its recruitment and selection, education and service delivery. We are concerned that since the Global HPO report, the council have not delivered on the recommendations fully.

The Joint Fora believe that more robust and evidence based monitoring and reporting of performance on a quarterly basis needs to be in place and that this should be imbedded in future policies to ensure that it is implemented consistently through all levels of the Council".

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 6.1 Year 4 of the Workforce Equalities Action Plan is expected to be implemented by in-house staff and be absorbed into existing workloads. Any other costs will be met from within existing budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen

Date: 23/05/16

- 6.2 The Year 4 Action Plan will be consistent with the council's Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and will facilitate

compliance with the council's specific equality duty to publish information under section 153 of the same Act.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 23/05/16

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 This report ensures that the council meets its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in regard to its workforce as well as its Corporate Plan commitments.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 6.5 There are no other significant implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Progress Report on the Workforce Equalities Action Plan - Year 3

Documents in Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

None.

