

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES****UPDATE REPORT ON ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S BLACK
WORKFORCE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide further information to Elected Members on the support identified for Black employees and to seek approval for the attached appendix, draft Equalities (Support for Black Workers) Action Plan.

Information

2. A report was considered at Personnel Committee on 8 July 2020 which served to update Members in relation to the Race at Work Charter and to seek approval for the additional actions identified to better understand the issues being raised and to provide support for Black employees. This was considered necessary to help the Council to tackle racism and discrimination. The recommendations included approval for the establishment of an additional Equalities Officer post within the Human Resources Workforce and Organisational Development Team to provide subject matter expert capacity in this area.
3. Discussions have been ongoing with the Council's self-managed Black Workers Group throughout the Covid pandemic and in the Corporate Equalities Group to identify what is required to provide support to Black colleagues. It was considered important to record the identified actions in one place so the relevant parties could be held accountable for progress being made and to provide a platform to measure the impact of the various activities.
4. Progress has been made and a refreshed job description for the Equalities Officer post is being consulted on with the various self-managed groups and it is intended for the recruitment advertisement to be placed at the beginning of September. The selection process will involve colleagues from the self-managed groups, Corporate Equalities Group and the recognised trade unions to ensure the successful candidate is tested on the full range of equality issues which the Council seeks to make progress on.
5. The Council, as a large employer and community leader, will continue to challenge racism and discrimination in our Council and communities, and support black colleagues in our many service areas and their daily lives where they face discrimination and prejudice. Whilst we have had long standing policies and procedures to address racism and other forms of discrimination, the current situation has provided an opportunity to review our position and

work with staff support networks and trades union colleagues to identify additional actions to promote discussion, raise awareness and identify how we can further improve.

6. The attached draft action plan is extensive and ambitious and will be added to over time as new ideas and initiatives are generated to ensure it retains its currency and meets the objectives it is intended to achieve. It provides a framework in which work can be planned in advance so important events, for example Black History Month and Windrush Day, are celebrated and marked with appropriate events to enable them to have a refreshed profile across the whole of the Council's workforce and Nottinghamshire communities. The action plan will be an addendum to the Council's overarching Equalities Action Plan which has some specific actions identified regarding each of the specific areas but also more general actions around inclusivity and accessibility.
7. The information contained in the Workforce Profile which has been considered earlier on this Committee's agenda will be used to further develop actions and to provide further lines of enquiry to enable the Council to fully understand the challenges faced by some of its workforce and to remove any barriers to inclusion and career progression. This will also lead to targeted actions to understand why there appears to be some barriers to career progression when proportionally more Black employees access learning development opportunities and coaching. As reported in the Workforce Profile report, it is important to bear in mind the limited opportunities recently available at service director level and above, with the service director posts reducing from 27 to 10 posts over the previous 10 years.

Other Options Considered

8. The Council has a legal obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish information regarding the makeup of its workforce. The action plan draws together a suite of priority areas requiring further work and which seek to build on progress made to date by further improving the diversity of its workforce. No other options were considered as effective in meeting this ambition.

Reasons for Recommendations

9. The Council has a duty to all its employees and the citizens of Nottinghamshire to create and maintain a working environment free from harassment and discrimination, to support and enable people to develop their careers and to provide inclusive and accessible employment opportunities for all. The draft action plan provides a framework to enable progress to be monitored and which will be added to over time. The current situation makes this a timely and important set of initiatives which will assist the Council to recruit and retain people from a diverse range of backgrounds and ensure we have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to meet future challenges.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

11. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

Financial Implications

12. There is no additional funding required arising from the recommendation in this report as any costs for additional development and learning opportunities will be met from the existing HR, Workforce and Organisational Development service budgets.

Human Resources Implications

13. The Council continues to aspire to be an Employer of Choice for all and therefore it is important to take the necessary actions to ensure people feel they will be treated fairly and any type of harassment, discrimination or bias is challenged and eradicated.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

14. We previously identified that signing the Race at Work Charter, provided evidence of how we are meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The additional actions set out in the attached action plan will further support the Council in meeting and going beyond its statutory obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To approve the actions identified in the Draft Equalities (Support for Black Employees) Action Plan.
- 2) To receive an update on progress made towards meeting the identified actions at Committee in January 2021.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 24/08/20)

15. The recommendations fall within the remit of Personnel Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 25/08/20)

16. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (JP 25/08/20)

17. The Action Plan within this report supports the Authority in respect of its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All