

Scrutiny recommendation tracker – 5 September 2016 CEB

The City Executive Board (CEB) on 14 July agreed responses to Scrutiny Committee recommendations on the following items:

- Report of the Equality and Diversity Review Group
- Apprentices
- Fusion Lifestyle’s 2016/17 Annual Service Plan
- Grant Allocations - Monitoring Report
- Private Sector Housing Policy
- Review of Lord Mayors Deposit Guarantee Scheme

Report of the Equality and Diversity Review Group

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agreed?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1. That the Council undertakes comprehensive accessibility audits of its employment practices, premises, public-facing information (for instance, on the website) and externally available application forms, at appropriate intervals. Consideration should be given to how frequently these audits should take place at each workplace premises and to the setting of maximum intervals between audits.	N	Accessibility audits were previously undertaken periodically on the Council’s employment premises when we had a dedicated Equalities Officer. More typically now, officers in various service areas provide expertise (e.g. Building Control) when changes are being introduced. We also get external advice as accessibility issues arise e.g. what type of devices are needed for people with hearing difficulties to participate more effectively in meetings, use the phone, etc. There is also a dedicated budget to fund specific equipment designed to assist with accessibility. Oversight is provided by colleagues in Human Resources to ensure we keep abreast of accessibility developments. Given this approach a regular audit would require additional resourcing and cost and is unlikely to add further value
2. That the Council reviews recruitment branding to better target any vacancies at under-represented groups and young people, including utilising settings or channels that are less traditional to local government but more inclusive.	In part	All jobs are advertised using a range of media sources, including Job Centre Plus, Social Media and Job Boards. Increasingly we run recruitment events which prove to be a successful way of reaching out to the wider community. Dependant on the role traditional print media and community magazines have also been used, but use of these is dependent on publication dates and cost. We are doing more work with the Communication Team to look at how we can improve employer branding and our use of social media. Focus groups in the local community were used to help identify how we could become more attractive as an employer to under-represented groups.
3. That the Council continues to promote itself as an inclusive employer through outreach activities including continuing to hold open recruitment	Y	This work is already in place and continuing. We have just held a second recruitment roadshow this year and for the first time this was held in one of our Community Centres. We aim to continue to run these events, however

sessions in community settings, reaching out in schools through the Business in the Community partnership, and attending job fairs and community meetings.		there is a significant cost in time and money to organise, promote and run these events and there is no budget in place to support this. The organisation will also continue to attend local job fairs as appropriate. The successful mentoring programme with Cherwell School continues and we are currently exploring whether to open this out to more educational establishments.
4. That the Council investigates opportunities to advertise multiple vacancies in community settings at low cost, which could include making use of community newspaper social media platforms, as well as community newspapers and, as long as those running them are willing, community centres.	Y	As stated above we advertise in community magazines but doing so depends on publication dates and costs. The infrequency of publication can be an issue. The HR Team will familiarise themselves with publications/dates/costs and work proactively with recruiting managers to make better use of this media. The HR Manager will also explore whether Community Centres would be willing to advertise our job vacancies on notice boards, etc.
5. That the Council makes use of its assets to promote itself as an inclusive employer, including Streetscene vehicles.	N	This is a good way of advertising but it is very expensive (e.g. advertising on a refuse lorry runs to several thousand pounds per campaign). With no budget for this unfortunately the approach is cost prohibitive.
6. That the Council reviews its Talent Management Framework and researches whether the inclusion of a more targeted talent management programme would appeal to under-represented groups, as well as what such a programme would include.	Y	This is a project that the OD team will be commencing in July 2016.
7. That the Council emphasises the value it attaches to the ability to speak a second language by including this skill in the desirable criteria for selected customer-facing job vacancies, such as Tenancy Management Officers and Customer Service Officers.	Y	The HR Manager will work with recruiting managers to recommend inclusion of a second language as a desirable criterion where appropriate.
8. That the Council undertakes a workforce skills audit with the purpose of identifying priority competencies and hidden talents that aren't currently being utilised but would benefit to the organisation, including the ability to speak a second language.	N	The Council has a good understanding of the skills of its workforce locally within services. However undertaking a large skills audit would be a significant piece of work; to determine what data needs collecting, actually collecting it and not least maintaining it. The benefits of doing such a large piece of work are unlikely to outweigh the cost when (for example) we already know who to call on for the ability to speak a second language when required.
9. That the Council considers the feasibility of having staff who are known to speak a second language 'on call' to communicate with customers who speak little or no English, and whether these staff could be rewarded with a small pay	N	It is better to have an independent translator in these situations. The language line is how we currently provide this service, however there may be more technical solutions which we could explore. We would not recommend using employees whose fluency/competency in speaking another language would be unknown.

supplement.		
10. That all Council employees are reminded of the Council's Fair Employment Statement and employment policies at least annually. These documents should also be prominent and easily accessible on the Council's Intranet.	Y	The HR and OD Team will be reviewing the intranet content that they hold this year to make policies more accessible. HR Matters (a monthly brief to all managers) is also be used to promote policies.
11. That all Council employees are at least annually made aware of their responsibility to challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in the workplace, wherever that may be, as matter of course.	Y	Every year each employee undertakes a self-assessment on how they position themselves against the Council's values and behaviours – one of which is about valuing diversity. This self-assessment forms the basis of a discussion with the manager and 3 development areas are agreed for the year based on the values. This gives an opportunity to discuss discriminatory language and behaviours.
12. That unconscious bias training is provided to the Council's most frequent recruiting managers and HR Business Partners. Ideally this would be followed up with annual refresher courses in order to maintain awareness and compliance with good practice.	Y	The OD Team will be designing a workshop around this in 16/17 and this can be offered to recruiting managers. The HR Team already provide recruitment training to managers and this includes information on unconscious bias.
13. That the Council identifies one or more Diversity Champions at senior levels who would help to embed equality in the workplace. These Diversity Champions could lead on communicating the importance of diversity and monitoring within the organisation and co-ordinate a calendar of activities in support of celebrations such as Black History Month, Pride, etc.	N	The OD Team have been trying to make diversity part of business as usual. Having Champions would also require additional resource to manage and coordinate. The OD Team could however work more closely with the culture team to promote events and activities.
14. That the Council identifies an elected member to oversee and externally represent the Council's equality and diversity work.	Y	This could be the responsibility of the portfolio holder that covers Equalities and Diversity, or other chosen elected member.
15. That the Council seeks to obtain better value from its status as a Stonewall Diversity Champion and, failing that, considers whether the small membership fee would be better invested in other means of tackling discrimination.	TBC	Referred back to Scrutiny Committee to reconsider in light of a submission received from Stonewall.
16. That the Council continues to ask employees to review and complete their personal details, including sensitive information such as their sexual	In part	This is regularly promoted by the HR Team and employees are encouraged to review and update their details. In May 2016 managers were asked to remind staff about this matter. We will continue to promote this and will do

orientation, on at least an annual basis, as well as continuing to target identified data gaps. Explanation should be provided as to why sensitive personal information is held by the organisation and the wider benefits of doing so.		more this year to focus on missing information. Some employees actively choose not to record this information.
17. That the Council sets targets for increasing disclosure rates to reduce data gaps for sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity over a fixed period of time (e.g. eighteen months).	N	Targets would not assist with reducing data gaps. Whilst the HR Team can continue to encourage and promote disclosure of this information, some people actively choose not to provide this information, which is their right to do so.
18. That the Council maintains a watching brief on good practice in workforce equalities monitoring and continues to keep its own monitoring arrangements under review, including how questions are asked and the language used as well as the continued inclusion of a 'prefer not to say' option.	Y	The Organisational Development & Learning Manager ensures the OD team keep up to date with this.
19. That consideration is given to whether the sensitive personal data of applicants and employees requested and held by the Council should be more inclusive of transgender people. For example, the Council should consider consulting with appropriate individuals and Trade Unions on adding an appropriately worded gender identity field to its monitoring forms, with the clear purpose of building equality and identifying discrimination.	In part	We will discuss with trade union colleagues and clarify best practice in this area.
20. That the Council adopts gender-neutral terms on forms as part of its ongoing work to be as inclusive as possible, for instance, giving consideration to adding the title Mx in addition to the more established gendered titles such as Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms.	Y	Subject to the HR software being able to include the addition of the title Mx without significant costs then this option could be added. The requirement to record a title could also be made optional rather than mandatory, again depending on the ability to change the software.
21. That consideration is given to whether there is merit in phasing out the use of titles on Council forms and databases over the medium term.	N	We do not consider that we should take away the ability for people to use a title on a job application, although it could be made optional.

Apprentices

Recommendation	Agreed?	Comment
1. That consideration is given to extending the eligibility criteria for apprenticeships beyond the OX1 to OX4 postcode areas but with a preference for appointing applicants with these postcodes.	Y	The eligibility criteria is important as it gives opportunities to candidates living in the city and needing support - this will still be a priority. However given the significant increase in the number of apprenticeships being recruited and to ensure a rich pool of candidates the extension of postcodes was trialled this year with success and this will form part of future campaigns.
2. That consideration is given to making apprenticeship opportunities available to applicants aged 20-24.	Y	This will allow the Council to better target NEETs and facilitate a route into work for early career changers and women entering work for the first time (where having and managing families might have interrupted school/ college studies and reduced career opportunities).
3. That a more co-ordinated approach is taken in schools to raise awareness of apprenticeship and work experience opportunities and promote them to pupils and their parents.	Y	The Business in the Community partnership work over the past two years has enabled the Council to work with schools to deliver apprenticeship workshops, talks for specific school year groups, career workshops and a city wide apprenticeship "Earn while you Learn" awareness raising event (attended by over 100 students who had declared an interest in apprenticeships). The next stage of a more co-ordinated approach will feature a series of parents evening workshops with a presentation on local labour market information put together by our economic development team. These colleagues will also be presenting at an "Educating the Educators" BiTC event on July 13 th geared at informing careers advisors and teachers with work experience/ careers responsibilities. The Council will further develop its work experience offering in consultation with schools during the summer and early Autumn.
4. That a particular focus is put on encouraging Black and Minority Ethnic pupils to take up work experience placements and apprenticeships.	Y	Some of our BME former apprentices have successfully acted as ambassadors to promote their experience back in schools and various events. It's encouraging that 20% of our recent apprenticeship cohort applicants are from BME backgrounds. We will continue this ambassador approach and work with schools to look for other ways to engage with young BME and other pupils as potential future apprentices. Work experience placements work well in tackling barriers to work, e.g. qualifications, job interviews, breaking down employer stereotypes, english as a second language or wider access to support including careers advice. We will do more with schools to ensure an appealing work experience programme is in place attracting a diverse range of candidates.
5. That the Council links in with social housing	N	The Council has an agreement in place with Activate Learning; they

providers and higher education colleges in order to engage with hard to reach groups.		promote and place our apprenticeship vacancies on the National Apprenticeship website and we signpost unsuccessful applicants to them for advice and guidance on alternative options.
6. That the Council considers what can be learnt from the Change 100 internship programme, including their advertising and social media campaigns.	Y	Whilst the Council took the decision not to engage with the Change 100 programme on the basis it felt it didn't represent value for money, we will explore what we can learn from their advertising and media campaigns to better engage with disabled students. For this group and the wider cohort we can use social media more effectively to raise interest in work experience and apprenticeships.
7. That further consideration is given to defining and promoting the Council's brand and offer to prospective apprentices, including in terms of pay rates and career progression opportunities.	In part	Wage rates are informed by the national apprenticeship picture, the local economy, the cost of living in Oxford and what is affordable in order to recruit the maximum number of apprenticeships. Our recent campaign was the most successful yet with over 170 applicants so the financial offer seems reasonable. Part of the strategy is to do more workforce planning so that the apprenticeship leads to a permanent job wherever possible. Our track record is good in achieving this but in hiring more apprentices we need to manage the succession planning more effectively. We have developed the apprentice webpages and uploaded a series of films where apprentices tell their stories (led by direct local market research into what applicants wanted) and believe that this has improved the profile of Council apprenticeships. However effective communication needs to 'speak' to potential applicants in the language they understand and through the right method so we will work with our internal communications and Youth Ambition teams to ensure we are making best use of tools such as social media and video to connect with the widest audience.
8. That the Council seeks to influence Oxfordshire Skills Board to do more to promote apprenticeship opportunities.	N	This is already being done through the input of leading Councillors, BiTC and other local business forums and we would anticipate that this leadership role would continue.
9. That the Council keeps the details of the Enterprise Bill under review and makes appropriate plans to mitigate its impacts, including the Apprenticeship Levy and the apprenticeship start targets.	Y	We are planning how to manage the Apprenticeship Levy spend in order to maximise its impact including how we can provide accredited training internally as well as work with other providers. More details are emerging regarding apprenticeship start targets which at this stage is thought to mean 28 new apprenticeship starts each year. This would need some careful workforce planning giving the length of the apprenticeships e.g. 2 – 4 years and new cohorts potentially starting each year. We will report back to Members in the Autumn as more details emerge.

Fusion Lifestyle's 2016/17 Annual Service Plan

Recommendation	Agreed?	Comment						
1. That the Council encourages and seeks to facilitate stronger user representation on the Leisure Partnership Board, including by varying meeting times if required.	Y	<p>Current stakeholder groups represented at Leisure Partnership Board include Younger and Older People, Public Health, Early Intervention and Customers. Fusion have been tasked to increase attendance by users.</p> <p>The meeting times have been set following a doodle poll with attendees, although we are very happy to check again and set the meeting at the time that will ensure the best attendance.</p>						
2. That the Council encourages the formation of user groups at the remaining Leisure Centres and considers how these user groups could link in with the Leisure Partnership Board, perhaps with each user group having a representative on the Board.	Y	Ferry Leisure Centre and Hinksey Outdoor Pool both have regular or seasonal user group meetings and we have from Fusion a 2016/17 timetable of dates and times for all facilities. Fusion are looking to encourage representation by customers.						
3. That the Council takes further steps to understand why the numbers of swimming visits have declined amongst some target groups and challenges Fusion Lifestyle to set a more ambitious target for increasing swimming visits by people over the age of 60 in 2016/17.	Y	<p>Nationally there is a picture of general decline in participation of swimming. Officers continue to work with the Amateur Swimming Society to understand the reason for this and some target groups in Oxford are bucking the trend being used a good practice examples. Swimming visits have increased by the following amounts since 2013/14:</p> <table data-bbox="1048 874 1480 978"> <tr> <td>Fusion Swim School</td> <td>156%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Schools Swimming</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Casual Swims</td> <td>69%</td> </tr> </table> <p>We will continue to work to increase participation, with an increased focus on the over 60s.</p>	Fusion Swim School	156%	Schools Swimming	92%	Casual Swims	69%
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4. That further consideration is given to the case for and expected impacts of a proposal to introduce reduced non-concessionary membership fees at less well used leisure centres.	Y	<p>Customer feedback and our experience tells us that we need to avoid overly complicating our price structures.</p> <p>Fusion are though currently reviewing the membership offer within Oxford facilities, with 2017/18 fees and charges an agenda item at the July 2016 Leisure Partnership Board. This time line supports inclusion of any proposals in the Councils wider 2017/18 budget consultation process.</p> <p>It is important to bear in mind that all the centres are well used at peak times, and the greatest benefit to increase participation is to encourage more off</p>						

		<p>peak usage which is detailed in the city's Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020</p> <p>Will be pleased to give this further consideration within the review of fees and charges to ensure we are continually looking to remain competitive.</p> <p>We do continually monitor prices to ensure they are competitive, inclusive and provide value for money.</p>
5. That benchmarking on performance, participation and price is undertaken with the wider market, including the private sector, not just with neighbouring local authorities.	Y	<p>Fees and charges and membership offer benchmarking is compared across other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local districts • Fusion Lifestyle contracts • National comparators where they have similar centres (i.e. Exeter, Preston, Rushmoor, Runnymede) <p>Further benchmarking on performance, participation and price is undertaken as part of the UK quality award scheme for sport and leisure QUEST. As part of this process facilities engage with the partnership approach of an industry National Bench Marking Service, which provides critical data on the performance our leisure facilities such as access, finance, utilisation and satisfaction. This includes facilities run by council's, trusts and private operators.</p>
6. That further consideration is given to the idea of introducing gym-only membership options, perhaps on a limited trial basis.	Y	Please see our response to recommendation 4.
7. That consideration is given to the priority order of the five key strategic objectives for 2016/17.	N	As there are only five strategic objectives we do not feel they need to be ranked.

Grant Allocations - Monitoring Report

Recommendation	Agreed?	Comment
1. That consideration is given to how to quantify the social value achieved from the different grant programmes for community and voluntary organisations and to the inclusion of a measure of social value in future grant monitoring reports.	Y	This is an aspiration we are working towards, and I am also aware that there are many people working and volunteering in the community sector, and in particular in our community centres, who are keen for us to be able to quantify their work in their neighbourhoods. We do though need to be very mindful around how much time and resources is expended by our staff which could be spent actually working with and supporting community and voluntary groups.
2. That consideration is given to whether and how the Council could better integrate its grant programmes for community and voluntary organisations with related aspects of service delivery, with a view to focusing resources as effectively as possible.	Y	We will explore how we can best to do this.

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Private Sector Housing Policy (Housing Panel)

Recommendation	Agreed?	Comment
1. That careful thought is given to future public consultations on private sector housing interventions and that members are specifically invited to comment on the range and style of any consultations.	Y	I welcome the useful discussion of alternative approaches to consultation that took place at the Scrutiny Panel, and which led to this recommendation. The next steps towards the introduction of a PRS licensing scheme will necessarily involve very widespread consultation with the landlord community and with tenants, as well as the general public. I will ensure, with the appropriate Board members, that a very thorough plan is drawn up in advance of the next stage in the process.

Review of Lord Mayors Deposit Guarantee Scheme (Housing Panel)

Recommendation	Agreed?	Comment
That after the pilot year a review of the enhanced offer including expenditure, the number of clients assisted and refusal reasons is reported to the City Executive Board.	Y	Agreed – this was the intention.

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