

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 5 December 2017

Report of: Organisational Development Manager

Title: Equality and Diversity Review – progress update

43

Recommendation	Agreed?	CEB comment July 2016	Update August 2017
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.	No	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	Across the Council there are a number of ways services ensure accessibility including bespoke areas such as language line, different formatting and language for written documentation to ensuring disability access. In the last year there has been a comprehensive review of suitability of meeting rooms and a programme is rolling out to equip them with audio 'link'. We are now accredited with Customer Service Excellence which has criteria focused on customer access. The Council has also focused on Health and Safety at work this year and promoted DSE assessments for all desk based staff to support healthy environments.
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.	We continue to advertise posts using a range of media to attract a wide pool of candidates. In October we ran another recruitment roadshow (this time at Blackbird Leys Community Centre) which was promoted thorough a range of media,

		<p>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.</p>	<p>including Community Magazines, Libraries and through our Localities Team and Welfore Reform.</p> <p>Currently we are working on changes to our recruitment website. This is combined with the project to set up ODS.</p> <p>We are currently pulling together a forward plan for further improvements and changes to recruitment.</p>
<p>3. That the Council continues to promote itself as an inclusive employer through outreach activities including continuing to hold open recruitment sessions in community settings, reaching out in schools through the Business in the Community partnership, and attending job fairs and community meetings.</p>	Y	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>As noted above, we continue to hold recruitment events, but they take considerable time, money and effort from all involved and therefore the number of these events will be limited.</p> <p>The mentoring programme with Cherwell has now concluded but we are discussing with Community Services how we might be able support schools moving forward.</p>
<p>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.</p>	Y	<p>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</p>	<p>We do use Community publications where possible. This was done to promote the recent roadshow. We will continue to explore opportunities to use Community Centres more to promote our vacancies.</p>

		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.	No	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.	N/A
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.	The new OD strategy 2017-20 has a specific action within it to review the talent management framework and make it more relevant to workforce and succession planning. This review will include how to best engage with under-represented groups and include consultation with Unions
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.	Every role is reviewed before advertising and considered whether the essential and desirable criteria are correct. We will work with managers more moving forward to ensure that they consider this as part of the criteria.
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.	No	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	The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy has necessitated service areas review development needs Along with the annual L&D plan and associated budget this has encouraged managers to have conversations about taking the opportunities to gain career qualifications and build a more resilient workforce.

		already know who to call on for the ability to speak a second language when required.	In 2018 we are looking to procure an on-line people performance management programme which will enable to collation of skills and development data
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 supplement.	No	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.	N/A
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 used to promote policies.	The intranet review is currently underway to make access easier
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.	This remains an regular focus of discussion during appraisal meetings and going forward there is a plan to have an annual focus on each of the values which will include a promotion on diversity and standing up to inappropriate behaviour
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	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	This training is in place and available to all and specifically promoted to recruiting managers

compliance with good practice.		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.	No	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.	Not progressed
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.	Y	Funding would be better directed on more practical activity such as the unconscious bias training. As such the proposal is not to renew the Stonewall Diversity Champion accreditation	The Stonewall accreditation has not been renewed – and the Unconscious Bias training has been set up
16. That the Council continues to ask employees to review and complete their personal details, including sensitive information such as their sexual 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.	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 more this year to focus on missing information. Some employees actively choose not to record this information.	We continue to do this, but there are still gaps in the information. We have explored whether there is a way to automate the checking of personal data through the HR Information system, but unfortunately this is not currently possible.
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).	No	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.	N/A

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.	The development and publication of our Annual Workforce Equalities report maintains an annual dialog on equalities monitoring
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.	This will be considered along with the current review of the recruitment system.
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.	Currently we are working with system provider to make changes and improvements to the system and this will be considered as part of this process
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.	No	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.	N/A