

Appendix A

Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 04 December 2023 concerning the Equalities Update. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council surveys unsuccessful job applicants relating to equalities issues and surveys appointing managers as to why unsuccessful applicants were not recruited in order to improve the Council's data and insight into workforce equalities issues at the recruitment stage.	No	<p>Given our existing resources and the many new initiatives outlined in the Workplace Equalities Plan for 2024/25, we cannot commit to this in the next 12 months. There would be an additional cost of producing and delivering an online survey: it would be impractical and time consuming to do a manual survey. The survey could not be totally anonymous as we would need to track feedback by vacancy. This may put people off from being honest if they were interested in other roles.</p> <p>It is a great suggestion as it would be valuable to gather feedback. This may be something we can look at in the future when our online recruitment process is operating effectively. At present, we are trying to fix basic processes.</p>
2) That the Council sets a higher, more ambitious target for the representation of minority ethnic groups within the workforce to increase the pace of improving representation.	Yes	This is planned. Background work is complete and a suitable target needs now to be agreed by the senior leadership team and our Portfolio Lead.
3) That the Council explores the reasons for under-representation of Muslim staff within the workforce and works to identify and address barriers to the recruitment and retention of Muslim staff.	Yes	We can do some work around this by consulting with existing staff and our new staff network to identify barriers and possible solutions.
4) That the Council expands the gender identity options within its application forms and workforce monitoring to include options for Trans Man and Trans Woman.	Yes <i>depending on key staff feedback</i>	When groups are small, careful thought is needed around how far to go with the level of information gathered. There is a benefit to collecting this data and some individuals are likely to welcome the greater

		recognition of the two different groups of trans man and trans woman but some individuals may be uncomfortable sharing the extra layer of detail. I suggest we consult our LGBTQ+ staff network on this issue and take advice from Inclusive Employers as we are a member. If we believe it is the right thing to do after taking advice and staff soundings, then we will go ahead.
5) That the Council routinely collects Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data from all job applicants, regardless of the application route they take (e.g. CV or online application form).	Yes <i>but in the longer term</i>	<p>The data is certainly important and will help us identify issues or bias in selection processes. However, we should look for an online solution where applicants register with us and then submit a CV. We can look at whether we can deliver this with our current system in the future. There may be an extra cost associated with system changes as our system supplier may need to support any change.</p> <p>Our aim is to have a straightforward process for all applicants and that all applicants will apply online through our website. We wish to automate the process as much as possible. This will include collecting applicant personal data upfront and having managers shortlist online. Progress has been hindered because we have had a systems administrator vacancy for over 12 months but now have filled the post. There is an additional cost to deliver improvements to our system as we will need input from our software provider and we have made provision/a proposal in the capital budget.</p>
6) That the Council anonymises job application forms during the shortlisting process for all applications going forward.	Yes	This is something we have already explored and can't deliver right now. We will pick this up with the planned system review of how we manage recruitment. I am not sure when we will be able to deliver this but it is the right thing to do to reduce bias in the selection process.
7) That the Council maps the career trajectory over time for individuals within the workforce with a protected characteristic; to include information such as length of	No	We can look at whether we can report from our current HR system but this is a complex task as some people leave, the typical service/time with the authority will vary

service, pay grade, age and protected characteristic.		according to professional group and career pathways are clear in some areas and less clear in others. We can start by looking at more detailed workforce profiling but I would suggest this is not a priority for the team right now as we still have lots of basic functional processes to improve. Our focus is on addressing barriers to entry to the Council workforce currently and our plan is to monitor diversity by grade to see if our actions have any impact.
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