



Overview and Scrutiny Human Resources Sub Group

Date: Thursday, 4 October 2018

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

This is a **supplementary agenda** containing additional information about the business of the meeting that was not available when the agenda was published

Access to the Council Chamber

Public access to the Council Chamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. That lobby can also be reached from the St. Peter's Square entrance and from Library Walk. **There is no public access from the Lloyd Street entrances of the Extension.**

Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Human Resources Sub Group

Councillors - Russell (Chair), Andrews, Clay, Rowles and S Wheeler

Supplementary Agenda

2. **HR Policy Review** 3 - 6
Report of the Director of HROD

This report provides an update on work to deliver the agreed £3.2M savings target from employment policies, procedures and working arrangements across the 2017-2020 budget period. It also sets out progress to date and the key future actions for consideration.

3. **Workforce Equality** 7 - 72
Report of the Director of HROD

This report outlines the key workplace equality priorities that the Council has identified for specific action in 2018-19 and beyond in support of both the Council's corporate Equality Objectives and the Our People Strategy.

Further Information

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This supplementary agenda was issued on **Friday, 28 September 2018** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 6, Town Hall Extension (Mount Street Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - Human Resources (HR) Subgroup - 4 October 2018

Subject: HR Policy Review Update

Report of: Director of HROD

Summary

This report provides an update on work to deliver the agreed £3.2M savings target from employment policies, procedures and working arrangements across the 2017-2020 budget period. It sets out progress to date and the key future actions for consideration by the Subgroup.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Executive; 7 February 2018 - *Corporate Core Budget and Business Planning 2018-2020*

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A total savings target of £3.2M was agreed for employee policies, procedures and working arrangements across the three year budget period with £200K in 17/18 and £1.5M profiled in each of the following two years. - To deliver these savings Members agreed a strategy focused on compliance and promoting voluntary opportunities without the need for enforced changes to terms and conditions. This work was coupled with a focus on activity to reduce non-cashable workforce costs i.e. agency spend, sickness absence and the volume of and time to place those outside the funded structure.
- 1.2 In progressing work to identify and deliver these savings Officers from HROD have worked closely with leaders across the organisation and the Trade Unions to understand any risks or implications of proposals. To date, £1.7M in savings have been achieved in line with the agreed targets for 2017/18 and 2018/19. Measures to release £810K of the remaining £1.5M savings target have also been identified and work is underway to agree measures to close the remaining gap.

2.0 2017/18 and 2018/19 Savings

- 2.1 The £1.7M in savings profiled across these two years has been achieved through the measures outlined below.

2.2 2017/18 - £200K target

This target was achieved through introduction of a five day voluntary annual leave purchase scheme.

2.3 2018/19 - £1.5M target

This target has been achieved and, indeed, exceeded through a number of measures.

- £1.040M has been delivered through an adjustment to the standard vacancy factor used across the Council from 2% to 2.5%, this has been enabled by work to reduce areas of non-budgeted workforce spend as outlined above.
- £160K has been delivered through work to release long term vacancies in the Core
- £45K has been delivered to date through a review of Council funded car parking passes and the creation for clear criteria for allocation. (A further

£23K has been saved in non-mainstream areas through this work and a number of passes remain under review)

- £350K has been delivered through additional annual leave purchase, supported by an enhancement of the scheme to enable a further five days to be purchased and a voluntary Christmas closedown of non-essential Council services¹.

3.0 2019/20 Savings Update

3.1 Review of Essential Car User Allowance

- 3.1.1 Essential car users (ECU) are people who need a car to carry out their role. There are clear criteria to determine whether car use is 'essential'. Under existing policy, essential car users receive a lump sum of circa £1,000 p.a. as well as a mileage allowance of 42.6p per mile. In contrast, casual car users are paid at a higher rate of 54.4p per mile but without the lump sum payment on the basis of no bar on minimum miles travelled. - A total budget of £2.1M is currently held across the Council for staff mileage and ECU 'lump sum' payments.
- 3.1.2 Analysis has revealed that the vast majority of ECU recipients are not compliant with this minimum (2,000) miles eligibility threshold in place under the scheme (1,091 out of 1,204 based on an analysis of the previous financial year). - A strict application of this criteria will therefore generate significant budget savings. However, in progressing this work consideration has been given to two key risks:
1. It should be expected that former essential users will claim a number of miles at the casual rate and sufficient budget provision will need to be retained for this, with this provision kept under review.
 2. Whilst policy compliance will be applied to all staff, there is a significant risk to workforce stability in some areas, particularly Children's Social work where turnover is high and local competition for workers significant. Thought needs to be given as to how this compliance is pursued without destabilising the workforce.
- 3.1.3 Taking account of the above, a savings plan to release budget savings of £460K through ECU compliance, ending the lump sum payment to those not reaching the minimum mileage threshold, has been developed. Subject to

¹ This figure is above the £200K savings target from 2017/18

detailed planning work, this will be progressed from November to enable savings to be realised by the new financial year.

- 3.1.4 Throughout the implementation period HROD Officers will work closely with services to understand and mitigate any risks or issues which arise at an individual level. Ongoing engagement with the Trade Unions will also continue on both implementation and in the development of clear criteria for ongoing proactive review of ECU payments.
- 3.1.5 In support of this work, discussions are underway with the TfGM Travel Choices team who are providing support in identifying more sustainable and efficient transport options for staff both to and from and in work. Further work is also being undertaken with a view to extending the Car Club, which can facilitate access to vehicles on an hourly or daily basis, if this is deemed to be a more efficient and sustainable means of transport.

3.2 Additional Savings Measures

- 3.2.1 Subject to the implementation of the above proposal there remains a further 'gap' of £1.04M against the £1.5M savings target for 2018/19. Two further options have been identified to close this gap by £350K:
- An increase off the income target for annual leave purchase by £150K to a total of £600K based on projected performance in 2018/19
 - £200K savings from the introduction of a salary sacrifice model for pension AVCs. (Discussions on this are at a very early stage and implementation will be subject to further analysis).

3.3 Closing the Gap

- 3.3.1 Accounting for the above there remains a £690K savings gap and an analysis of opportunities to close this gap is currently underway.

4.0 **Conclusion**

- 41 The above information summarises progress in relation to delivery of the £3.2M savings target from workforce policies, procedures and working arrangements across this budget period. Members' comments and questions are welcomed.

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - Human Resources (HR) Subgroup - 4 October 2018

Subject: Workforce Equality

Report of: Director of HROD

Summary

This report outlines the key workplace equality priorities that the Council has identified for specific action in 2018-19 and beyond in support of both the Council's corporate Equality Objectives and the Our People Strategy. A number of initiatives and approaches that will be adopted to progress these priorities are set out in the context of an overarching aim to have a more representative, better supported and equally satisfied workforce at all levels. The priorities and approaches presented here, in the main, build on work that has already been taking place and are complemented by new activities that demonstrate the Our Manchester behaviours in action.

The report describes how these activities align with the Council's successful re-accreditation at the 'Excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government and indicates how the outcomes of the re-accreditation will contribute to further improving our approach to workforce equality.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Finance Scrutiny Committee: Human Resources Sub-Group; 26 October 2016 - *Workforce Equality Update*
- Economy Scrutiny Committee; 3 January 2018 - *Apprentices in Manchester*
- Personnel Committee; 7 March 2018 - *Pay Policy Statement 2018/19*
- Workforce Equality Information (online),
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/5879/equality_analysis/3

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's long-standing commitment to equality and inclusion is a central feature of Our Manchester, and the principles of Our Manchester are similarly at the heart of the Council's people strategy, Our People. These documents not only articulate the type of place that Manchester wants to be but also the type of workforce that will help enable it; a workforce which reflects the strengths, capabilities, identities, cultures and aspirations of the city's population across all Services and at all levels.
- 1.2 There is a great deal of good practice in the Council's overall approach to equality, providing a solid platform to build on. This is most clearly evidenced by the Council's re-accreditation at the 'Excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) following a comprehensive peer review process in June 2018 (see *section 3*). It is recognised though, that excellence is an ongoing objective and this report identifies a range of improvement priorities in relation to workforce equality.
- 1.3 The main priorities that have been identified for improvement centre around underrepresentation of some groups in the workforce overall, and more so at higher pay grades. There are also significant opportunities to improve equality-related engagement with the workforce, supporting the day to day management of equality matters and enhancing the workplace experience of employees with protected characteristics. Additionally, there is an opportunity to strengthen and diversify the content and impact of the Council's equality-related learning and development offer.
- 1.4 There is a crucial role for leaders and managers across the organisation to realise these opportunities. Approaches that are devised and driven Corporately require organisational buy-in to ensure that they are accessed and experienced by the wider workforce. The equalities governance arrangements described in section 11 of this report are important mechanisms for Corporate approaches to be shared and coordinated at Directorate level, and can support the confidence and capability of leaders and managers to deliver satisfactory equality outcomes more effectively.
- 1.5 The Council is clear that its aim is for a workforce that is more representative of the city's diverse communities, and that all individuals are appropriately and equitably supported to fulfil their potential as employees. This includes a commitment to giving due consideration to those instances where different or innovative approaches will be required to achieve a more equitable outcome. Progressing this aim will support the Our People Strategy objectives, the Council's social value priorities as an employer, and will complement associated work as a commissioner and influencer. Examples of the work currently being delivered or planned are outlined in this report.

2. Background: Workforce Representation Priorities

- 2.1 Data from the 2011 Census (the most statistically reliable demographic data set available for Manchester across most characteristics) illustrates that circa

17% of residents indicated that they were living with a 'long-term illness, health problem or disability' that limited day to day activities (either a little or a lot). The proportion of people identifying as disabled in the Council's workforce is low by comparison, currently 5% in total (the same proportion as in 2016-17). This level of underrepresentation is fairly consistent throughout the grading structure up to leadership level roles, where disabled employee representation falls to less than 1% at each grade from 11 upwards.

- 2.2 Despite an increase in the overall representation of disabled employees over recent years (from 3.4% in January 2015), there is some concern that these statistics may not be wholly reliable; engagement with disabled officers in recent years has indicated that some employees with impairments and conditions that meet the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability do not regard themselves to be disabled, or that they elect not to disclose this for personal reasons. This is supported by information from the Council's BHeard Survey which suggests a figure more in the region of 14%. Work to address this, such as promoting the opportunity to self-report disability status through the mi-self portal and engagement with the Disabled Officers Network Group, is ongoing.
- 2.3 The Council also experiences an underrepresentation of BAME employees compared to Manchester's population, although the current figure of 25% is a very significant improvement on the 2016-17 figure of 20% and supported by a significantly higher proportion of BAME new recruits (comprising 31% of new recruits between 1 February 2017 and 31 January 2018). Notwithstanding the increase, the proportion of BAME Manchester residents in the 2011 Census was circa 33% and the Annual Population Survey forecasts that Manchester's BAME population will have risen to circa 43% by the next Census in 2021. As with disabled employees, this underrepresentation is further emphasised at grade bands 10 and over.
- 2.4 The Council experiences positive trends in relation to some characteristic groups, for example 66% of the workforce is female and there is a higher proportion of women than men at all grade bands. However, there continue to be challenges in achieving greater representation of young people in what has been for some time an ageing workforce, with an average age of 47. It is anticipated that the ongoing apprenticeship programmes will help to achieve a more balanced age profile in the workforce in future and is also having a positive impact on bringing a higher proportion of BAME (42% of external apprentices with equality data recorded) and Disabled (6% of external apprentices with equality data recorded) people into the Council.
- 2.5 2017-18 data shows a slight improvement in the rate of sexual orientation monitoring arising from the ability to self-report via the mi self system. However, almost 50% of the workforce has not disclosed its sexual orientation on the system making statistically viable analysis of this data unreliable. This continues to be progressed through ongoing promotion of the mi self portal.
- 2.6 In line with the Equality Act (2010) the Council produces and publishes on its website an annual data set of key workforce equality metrics. This data set

provides an in-depth evaluation of the Council's workforce profile at 1 March 2018 and is available at:

https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/5879/equality_analysis/3

3. Workforce Equality Performance Measurement - EFLG

- 3.1 The Council originally achieved the 'Excellent' accreditation against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) in 2015, making it one of the few local authorities in England to achieve the award. Accreditation against the EFLG, which is produced and owned by the Local Government Association (LGA), lasts for three years and is based on an independent review of local authorities' equality outcomes across five performance areas covering our approach to equality both externally and internally as detailed in *appendix A* of this report.
- 3.2 In May 2018 the Council submitted for re-accreditation at the same level of the framework. A peer review team comprising an LGA coordinator and peers from other EFLG Excellent authorities visited in June to undertake an on site deep-dive assessment and conduct stakeholder interviews. The Council was subsequently successful in achieving its 'Excellent' level re-accreditation, and is one of a very select number of authorities to have retained the award in consecutive terms.
- 3.3 The peer review found that the Council was comfortably above the threshold for EFLG Excellence. Overall, the review confirmed the Council's own understanding of its equalities performance and provides independent assurance of our areas of strength and an impetus to focus our attentions on those areas for further development.
- 3.4 The review team produced a comprehensive and very complimentary report of its findings, attached at *Appendix B*, which Members are invited to consider. The report includes a number of areas for consideration in relation to workforce (performance area 5), and action against these areas will strengthen the organisation's equality delivery even further. Overall the main points arising from the review in relation to the workforce can be summarised as:
 - The Council has clearly demonstrated that it has progressed the recommendation from its 2015 review and has increased its strong focus on equality
 - The importance of the Our Manchester strategy as a driver for inclusion and equitability was recognised by many contributors, and by the peer team
 - There are good examples of equality in the workplace for Council employees, with many initiatives impressing, but the workforce profile remains unbalanced regarding BAME and disabled employees in particular requiring some targeted work

- Organisational learning and capacity around equality issues is progressing but can be accelerated to provide more balanced outcomes for the workforce.

3.5 It is worth noting that at both a City and a GM level, discussions are ongoing about how to better align local authority and NHS equality measurement frameworks and work collaboratively on joint areas of challenge. There is clear potential for work here to support both the Council's response to EFLG and, in particular, the workforce actions detailed below. However, in doing so it will be important that focus continues to be placed across the EFLG performance areas and that the distinctive local authority elements of this approach are not diluted.

4. Workforce Equality Review

- 4.1 In early 2018 the Council commissioned independent research partner to undertake consultation-based research into the Council's 'as is' performance on workforce equality, taking an employee view of the day-to-day lived experiences and perceptions of a cross-section of Council staff. This work was commissioned cognisant of the Council's long-standing commitment to equality but limited success in recent years in increasing the diversity of the workforce at a senior level in particular.
- 4.2 The research sample included employees with a range of identities, as well as role and working environment types with the aim of engaging our employees to help shape how we can further workforce diversity at all levels as opposed to 'doing to'. The fieldwork element of the commission concluded at the end of April 2018 and the outcomes reported in May. The research findings are summarised in this report along with a high level plan of action that flows from it. The full report is at *Appendix C*.
- 4.3 In numerous cases the outcomes of the review are very encouraging: people tend to have a positive perception of the Council as an inclusive employer; Our Manchester and Our People are well recognised and highly regarded; the organisational leadership on equality is recognised and appreciated; many systems, processes and initiatives are seen to be working well and in areas where this is not quite the case, employees largely want tweaks to what is already in train rather than wholesale change.
- 4.4 There were though, clear areas where participants in the review shared less favourable observations: the confidence and capacity of some line managers was seen to be a barrier to inclusion; there is some distrust of the internal recruitment processes and outcomes; employees seek more joined up engagement and communication on equality; employees appreciate the diversity of the workforce but observe a tail-off at the leadership level; a small number of participants feel that they have experienced discriminatory practice in the workplace.
- 4.5 Similarly, the review found that in addition to an employee's individual identity affecting their experience of equality at work, their working arrangements (i.e.

part time working) and work location can also have a detrimental impact on the working experience, especially with regard to how connected they feel to the organisation and its aims.

4.6 Interestingly, many employees do not recognise the term ‘diversity’ as referring only to minority groups; employees describe the importance of individuality, authenticity and being recognised and respected as a person as being central to their understanding of diversity and they encourage the Council to adopt the same approach. This is a very mature view of diversity and emphasises that a range of Our People workstreams, most notably OWOW and Health and Wellbeing, should be seen as fundamental components of our overarching approach to promoting equality in the workforce.

4.7 The table below outlines at a high level the proposed response actions to the review which also align with the workforce outcomes of the EFLG reassessment process:

BAME and Disabled employee employment initiatives	<p>A more evidence-based and proactive model is needed here. This will include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roll-out of an approach to ‘reverse mentoring’ at scale • a review of how diversity is assured in recruitment processes and how advertisements for roles are targeted • consideration of bespoke talent identification and learning and development programmes for target staff cohorts <p>The detail of our approach here will be co-designed with key stakeholders including staff and TUs.</p>
Equality & Diversity Training	Review of generic and specific E&D training, diversifying the offer and strengthening the assurance of mandatory training for all managers.
Equality Engagement	Review options and co-design a new approach with staff. This will take account of the review comments and, in particular the need to ensure a model which is not ‘Town Hall-centric’.
Leadership & Management	The Deputy Chief Executive to review the role and composition of the Equalities Champions group and Directorate Equalities Forums. The role of equality to be strengthened in the developing managers’ induction and leadership and management development programmes. A review of the tools and guidance available to support managers in understanding equality issues will

	also be undertaken.
Internal Recruitment	A new recruitment and selection policy will be underpinned by refreshed guidance for managers and mandatory ELearning which includes the issue of unconscious bias. The guidance will be strengthened further, informed by the review findings.
Closing the Loop	Focus needs to be given to strengthening corporate ownership of outcomes following engagement and the delivery of interventions to enable meaningful communications to be progressed. Work is needed to strengthen the approach here and create a clearer plan for delivery and communication.
Individual Flexibility	The findings of the review will be used to inform work ongoing in this area in support of the OWOW and Timewise Programmes.
Celebrating Diversity	Collaboration across services including Communications, Libraries, Galleries and Neighbourhood Services to broaden and strengthen the way the Council's external activity to celebrate diversity is supported and promoted.

5. Disability Confident Employer

- 5.1 The Government's Disability Confident scheme promotes good practice in disability-focused recruitment and employment. The Council is currently registered at level 2 of the scheme ('Disability Confident Employer' status achieved by completing a self-assessment of current practice) and aims to achieve level 3 accreditation ('Disability Confident Leader' status) through independent verification of the self-assessment and demonstration of leadership in the field by the end of March 2019. - The evidence and actions noted above will provide a key foundation for this work.
- 5.2 The Council will use its affiliation with the Disability Confident Employer framework to provide impetus to its disability-related activity. This activity will align to the framework's themes of recruitment and work-life satisfaction for disabled employees. Moreover though, the Council is committed to going beyond the aims of the scheme and seeks to increase levels of progression and representation of disabled people throughout the grading structure.
- 5.3 A comprehensive plan of works is being developed to facilitate this. The plan, which is being consulted on with Trade Unions and other stakeholders, will broadly fall into the areas of 1) improving existing systems and processes where applicable (with a particular focus on reasonable adjustments), 2) considering new measures where they do not already exist, and 3) ensuring

that all conditions and impairment types are equally considered. The approach seeks to improve outcomes and experiences for existing and new disabled employees, as well as existing employees that acquire a condition or impairment in their working life.

- 5.4 Whilst there are good systems in place in relation to some conditions and impairments already, the Council recognises the need to particularly focus on improving outcomes for people with hidden conditions, with work areas including:
- strengthening systems for the recruitment and in-work support of people with **neurodiverse conditions** (i.e. learning disability, autism spectrum conditions, aspergers, dyslexia)
 - improving the support available for people with **mental health conditions** (i.e. stress, depression, anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia) both reactively for individuals and proactively across the organisation
 - providing appropriate workplace adaptations to aid people with **sensory conditions** (i.e. profound hearing loss, visual impairment)
 - improving the in-work support for people who experience **chronic health conditions** (i.e. chronic pain, fatigue, MS, diabetes, lupus, ME)
- 5.5 This work is closely aligned to the Council's broader commitment to disability as set out in the Our Manchester Disability Plan and through the leadership of the Lead Member for Disabled People's Issues. It is also underpinned by the recently approved new strategy for employee health and wellbeing.

6. BAME Employees

- 6.1 The principles of the Council's approach to the Disability Confident Employer framework (i.e. a targeted focus on improving recruitment, retention and development of a specific employee cohort, cognisant of their identities and needs) are being applied to an equivalent piece of work to address the underrepresentation of BAME employees across the workforce generally and throughout the grading structure. This programme of work responds to workforce statistics regarding representation, alongside the outcomes of engagement with our BAME workplace and strongly supports the work programme of the Lead Member for Race.
- 6.2 The approach being applied to this programme of work shares some of the characteristics that underpin the disability work outlined above, namely:
- It will improve existing practice or consider new measures where they do not already exist
 - It will be based on input and involvement of key stakeholder groups including BAME employees
 - It will seek to improve outcomes for existing and new BAME employees
 - It will consider the distinct needs of different groups of BAME employees and seek to meet these
 - It will be a long-term commitment that is regularly reviewed and adjusted to maximise impact

- 6.3 Where applicable, consideration will also be given to accessing similar existing BAME-development frameworks; there is a significant focus on BAME employment at Greater Manchester level at present and partners in the NHS are working to progress the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). Similarly there is learning to be gained from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) best-practice toolkit. These options will be assessed and included in the approach to progress this objective.

7. Apprenticeship Opportunities

- 7.1 The primary purpose of Manchester's Work & Skills Strategy is to develop a work and skills system which meets the growth needs of business and enables residents from all backgrounds to obtain the skills and attributes required by employers. Quality apprenticeships, which are equally accessible to people of all characteristics and ages, are crucial to this system.
- 7.2 The Apprenticeship Levy has presented opportunities for employers in key growth sectors to work in partnership with training providers to develop higher level gateway roles into their industries aligned to new standards. To this end, the Council continues to work with a wide range of stakeholders including, businesses, training providers, schools, colleges, young people and their parents and carers to promote apprenticeships.
- 7.3 Since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the Council has set ambitious targets for apprenticeship recruitment and has enjoyed some success in diversifying the workforce; in 2017-18 6% of external apprentices with equality data recorded identified as disabled, 42% as BAME and 64% as female. In 2018-19, the programme has been developed further to include some focused work to increase the proportion of Looked After Children and BAME people accessing apprenticeship opportunities with the Council.
- 7.4 A detailed report on apprenticeships in Manchester was considered by Economy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 3 January 2018, and Members are encouraged to review this.

8. Refreshed Policy Approach

- 8.1 The Council's equality and diversity policy framework currently consists of two statement documents. The Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Statement was approved in 2011 to reflect the changes coming into force with the implementation of the Equality Act 2010. The Equal Opportunities in Service Provision Policy Statement was updated in 2012 for consistency with the employment policy.
- 8.2 These policy documents will be refreshed in 2018-19. The Council will take this opportunity to harmonise the two documents into a single policy statement, which is more consistent with the approach taken by other public sector organisations. The intention is that the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement will be a high level, reasonably brief and accessible document,

which will be supported by separate, more detailed guidance note, and underpinned by the Council's equality objectives.

- 8.3 In addition to this refresh, the Council has undertaken a benchmarking exercise, comparing its Employee Dispute Resolution (EDR) policy against other local authorities (including Grievance and Dignity at Work policies) and the NHS. As a result, a revised form has been adopted as part of the EDR process, which will monitor formal complaints raised via the EDR policy (formerly Grievance and Dignity at Work) by protected characteristic. This will enable the Council to monitor any disproportionate use of this policy by particular groups, and be able to assess whether there are measurable adverse workplace trends being experienced based on employees' characteristics.

9. Information and Guidance Refresh

- 9.1 The EFLG peer review and workforce equality review both concluded that the Council's managers and employees require improved access to equality related information and guidance as an awareness raising and proactive measure to promote good equality practice, as well as support from the HROD service to address more complex matters when they arise. There is a good amount of equality related information available on the Council's intranet, but it is disparate and owned by various different teams and services. - Work is ongoing to map and harmonise these pieces of existing information and guidance from a designated 'equality at work' resource.
- 9.2 This will also provide an opportunity to undertake a gap analysis of areas where information or guidance a) needs refreshing or b) is not available and needs to be created. The availability and improved accessibility of good quality guidance and information will enable autonomous, effective management of equality matters and support a more consistent equality experience at work for employees.

10. Supporting Diversity with 'Our People'

- 10.1 Work being undertaken in support of the Our People strategy has created numerous opportunities to support diversity and inclusive practice in work; a review of ways of working across the organisation aims to promote increased flexibility in working practices, which will act to support people to more effectively balance home and work commitments and drive increased flexibility as the norm in roles at all levels of the organisation. This activity is being progressed through the Our Ways of Working programme and supported by work as part of the Timewise Councils initiative. (An approach overseen by the LGA and Timewise to support Councils to develop an improvement plan to strengthen flexibility of employment at all levels informed by national best practice.)
- 10.2 This is complemented by ongoing work to enhance the Council's core Learning and Development offer and approach to supporting development and progression, with a particular emphasis on strengthening development

opportunities for frontline staff. Increased opportunities for employees to 'self-serve' their learning and development needs will improve access to a broader range of training interventions, directly and indirectly related to their current role. This is an area that various equality employee groups have previously advised has limited their ability to progress and fulfil their potential.

- 10.3 Strengthening and diversifying the Council's equality and diversity training offer is a critical feature here. There are three areas in scope for development: a refresh of the generic equality training package to raise all employees' awareness of and confidence around general equality issues; provision of training for all around specific equality issues or groups (i.e. supporting disability training, trans awareness training), and; targeted training and development initiatives for BAME and disabled employees linked to the representation and satisfaction activity described at sections 5 and 6. Provision of these will be worked through over the coming 12 months and will include opportunities to share resources and interventions with partners.
- 10.4 These personal development pathways will be supported by access to mentoring opportunities and the promotion of case studies, which have the potential to aid the capability, confidence and progression of underrepresented groups at work. In addition, continuing improvements to the About You framework will support managers to better understand and enable employees.
- 10.5 The roll out of Universal ICT access to all staff will enable equal access to information, including development opportunities and vacancies. In the past year this work has commenced with approximately 1,000 employees in the lowest paid roles now having access.

11. Equalities Governance Forums

Corporate Equality Champions Group

- 11.1 Implemented in 2015 to provide senior officer ownership of the equality agenda, the Corporate Equality Champions Group has been chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive - People, Policy & Reform and attended by senior managers across all Directorates.
- 11.2 Moving forward, the membership of this group will be subject to review in discussion with the Deputy Chief Executive in her capacity as SMT equality lead and chair of the group, to achieve parity of representation across Directorates and strengthen the diversity of the group itself.
- 11.3 The group meets quarterly to discuss internal and external equality priorities. Group members oversee progress on these pieces of work and take ownership of leading activity in their own service area to support the priorities. The Corporate Equality Champions Group takes a lead role in overseeing progress against the recommended areas for consideration stemming from the EFLG peer review. Directorate representatives need to work with their relevant colleagues to drive this forwards, including where available the Directorate Equality Forums.

Directorate Equality Forums

- 11.4 To support the work of the Equality Champions Group at Directorate level, the Neighbourhoods Directorate convened a Directorate Equality Forum, chaired by the Directorate's equality champion. This initiative was recognised as a positive way for priorities raised at the Equality Champions Group to get traction and to progress at Directorate level. The model encourages ownership of the equality agenda across service areas, which are represented at the forum by the service managers. The forum works on internal and external equality priorities.
- 11.5 Recognising the opportunities of this model, the Equality Champions Group endorsed the establishment of equivalent groups across Directorates. There is therefore also a Core Equality Forum and conversations are ongoing to establish equivalent groups in the Children's and Adults Directorates.

Equality Lead Members

- 11.6 The Council's Deputy Leader and executive Member for Equality, Councillor Sue Murphy, meets regularly with Equality Lead Members, supported by the Equalities team, to drive progress on the Council's equality objectives and ensure effective joint working across strand specific activities.

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

- 11.7 The role of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee is to review the work of the Council and its partners to reduce levels of crime and increase community cohesion in the city. The Committee routinely receives and considers reports on the Council's equality related activity both internally and externally, and hosts guest contributors as applicable to the agenda. The remit of the Committee is:-

- Community Cohesion
- Crime and Policing
- Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Equality and Inclusion
- Information and Advice Services
- Older People
- Youth Offending / Disorder
- Voluntary Sector
- Culture, Libraries and Theatres
- Leisure and Sport

Trade Unions

- 11.8 The three recognised Trade Unions are being consulted at each stage of the development of the activities set out above. Their involvement ensures that the voices and priorities of their members are considered and that they inform the design and application of any initiatives to progress workplace equality at the Council.

12. Gender Pay Gap Reporting

- 12.1 At its meeting of 7 March 2018, Personnel Committee considered a report on the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2018-19 which included information on the organisation's gender pay gap. The Council is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting on an annual basis from April 2018 in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, with the initial report based on a 'snapshot' date of 31 March 2017.
- 12.2 The snapshot analysis identified that the Council has a mean gender pay gap of 9.1%. Whilst this is significantly below the mean gap for the UK of 17.4% and the detailed analysis here demonstrates a close alignment with national trends as reported by the EHRC and detailed in the Pay Policy Statement. The Council is committed to continuing to reduce this differential, which will, in part, be supported by effective delivery of the initiatives outlined in this report.
- 12.3 It is worth emphasising that a 'Gender Pay Gap' is not the same as an issue of 'Equal Pay'. The Council's long-standing commitment to equality and solid analytical approach to pay and grading in line with the Single Status Agreement give confidence that Council employees receive the same remuneration when carrying out the same or equivalent work. The gender pay gap therefore does not stem from paying men and women differently. Rather, it is the result of the roles in which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries that these roles attract.
- 12.4 Pay gap reporting is currently limited to gender pay, with advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission stating that pay gap reporting of other characteristics is not considered best practice due to the greater range of external influences.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 There is a great deal of work in train and planned in 2018-19 and beyond to progress workplace equality in the Council. Some of this is a continuation or enhancement of business as usual approaches, but there is a healthy amount of new activity that responds to what the organisation understands to be its prevailing workplace equality challenges.
- 13.2 In particular, the focus on improving proportionate representation of disabled and BAME employees throughout the grading structure seeks to address long-standing underrepresentation for these groups. These initiatives will continue to be developed throughout the remainder of 2018-19, but it will be a process of years rather than months before the Council can demonstrate significant and sustained success in these areas.
- 13.3 More than simply a matter of proportionate representation though, there will be a focus on the workplace experience and satisfaction of minority characteristic groups in the workforce. Learning from employee voice via the equality review and subsequently establishing ongoing employee-led channels of engagement

will be critical to moving the Council forward on workplace equality in new ways.

- 13.4 Similarly, the success of the work being led by HROD will depend on it being adopted and owned by other Council services. Equality matters and progress will be considered by the Corporate Equality Champions Group and Directorate Equality Working Groups, with the aim that the Council benefits from corporately and locally driven activity across all of its service areas, locations and role types.
- 13.5 These measures will assist the Council to continue to strengthen its performance against the 'Skilled and Committed Workforce' performance area of the EFLG.

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Appendix A: Equality Framework for Local Government Performance Areas

‘Knowing Your Communities’ measures performance in the following areas:

- Collecting information
- Analysing and using information
- Sharing information between partners

‘Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment’ measures performance in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Local vision and priorities
- Equality objectives
- Monitoring and Scrutiny
- Effective communication
- Commissioning and procuring services
- Fostering good relations

‘Involving Your Communities’ measures performance in the following areas:

- Engagement structures
- Effective engagement
- Working in partnership
- Participation in Public Life

‘Responsive Services and Customer Care’ measures performance in the following areas:

- Equality analysis/ impact assessment
- Integration into business planning and delivery
- Accessible services
- Human Rights

‘A Skilled and Committed Workforce’ measures performance in the following areas:

- Workforce Diversity
- Workforce strategy
- Workforce monitoring
- Employment and training policies and procedures
- Staff engagement
- Promoting an inclusive working environment
- Equal pay
- Harassment and bullying
- Appraisals
- Learning and development

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Appendix B: EFLG Peer Review Final Report

Manchester City Council – Local Government Equality Framework Re-accreditation Peer Challenge June 27/28 2018

Thank you again for inviting the Local Government Association to undertake a peer challenge to reassess your organisation against the “Excellent” level of the Local Government Equality Framework. I am pleased to confirm that the peer team were unanimous in concluding that Manchester City Council could be re-accredited at the “Excellent” level of the framework. Your new award will be valid for a further three years.

The team undertook a desktop analysis of your self-assessment and supporting documents. This was followed up by a two day site visit during which we met with managers, staff and other stakeholders. We really appreciated the welcome and hospitality provided by the Council and we would like to thank everybody that we met during the process for their time and contributions. The peers were:

- Councillor Ross Willmott – Leicester City Council
- Paul Peng – Head of Equality and Cohesion, Knowsley Borough Council
- Shammi Jalota – Head of Profession, Equalities & Partnerships Essex County Council
- Sonia Khan – Head of Policy and Partnerships, London Borough of Hackney
- Gill Elliott – Review Manager LGA

The basis for the peer challenge is an assessment against the five areas of the Equality Framework for Local Government which are:

- Knowing your customers
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your customers
- Responsive services, access and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

The peer team was very pleased to see that the Council has addressed the recommendations of the peer challenge team in 2015 and that it has maintained and even increased its strong focus on equalities within the community since it first gained the Excellent level award in 2015. This is in part a result of its new city strategy “Our Manchester 2015-2025” which has driven a significant culture change in the organisation. The strategy’s four principle themes of People, Listening, Strength in the Community and Working Together were evident throughout the peer challenge in the conversations with staff, members and partners and other stakeholders. “Our Manchester” was also evident in the Council’s approach to neighbourhood based services, its work with health and voluntary sector partners and in its response to the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017.

This letter sets out what we think are some of the many strengths that the Council has with regard to equality and diversity, along with some areas you might wish to consider taking forward. Our comments are grouped under the Framework’s five

main areas.

Knowing Your Communities

The Council has a good understanding of its communities. It recognises that there are changing dynamics in the city as new communities emerge, and existing communities grow and change. However it also acknowledges that it could be better at understanding the changing profiles and needs of these newer communities. Some interviewees talked about needing to better understand newer communities such as the West African community.

The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) is mature and a JSNA around the social model of disability is also being developed. Whilst a data hub exists, the Council could gain even more and richer information about emerging communities by carrying out some “deep dive” data and intelligence gathering exercises which will help to discover what the up and coming challenges are e.g. gang violence and mental health.

There is good analysis of data as seen in the Communities of Interest Report and the review into cohesion in the city which was one of the responses to the terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena in 2017. Good use is made of Insight to enrich data. The Manchester Active Card and the Living Library are good examples of how the Council is finding new ways to gather information about customers who use Council facilities.

The Council’s collaboration with partners is enriching its knowledge and enabling it to gain a deeper understanding of residents. An example of this is its work with higher education institutions to generate an ethnographic study of Manchester and an external study of the Health and Wellbeing system. Another example is the work being done by the new Local Care Organisation (LCO). Data is being provided by a range of partners including police, fire, the ambulance service and housing providers. Mental Health Trusts are also involved. Sharing data sets is still an issue but all the partners seem determined to find ways to overcome problems with sharing data.

Member Champions were strongly committed to driving change for each of the protected characteristics. It is also a good way of giving responsibility to non-executive as well as executive members which in itself is an inclusive way of working. The Member Equality Leads actually have good knowledge about emerging communities which may be very small, such as the growing Nigerian community.

The Senior Leadership team does receive equality and diversity data but peers felt that it could look at some data in more depth when determining priorities, such as around work and skills. There is also a case for greater integration of equalities into performance management. Focusing on addressing the barriers that people face from those groups of people who disproportionately experience inequalities (such as in health or education) is more likely to drive up performance.

Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

The Council’s commitment to its equality agenda is clearly driven by its elected Members. Equality is key to the Council’s Labour Group manifesto. Members

themselves are a very diverse group and very active as leaders in their own wards and communities. The Member Equality leads are a real strength. They have their own plans and work is underway to strengthen links between these plans and corporate objectives. Whilst closer alignment to the corporate objectives is admirable, having some tension between them rather than complete alignment can also help “push the envelope” on equality. Peers did think that all Members might benefit from an annual refresher training course on equalities and making this mandatory should be considered. The training could be thematic, addressing newer issues like mental health and transgender rights.

The Chief Executive is very clear about the equality priorities of the Council. She is keen to ensure that council services make an impact on poverty in the city. Her own style is very inclusive and open as demonstrated by her meetings with front line staff at outlying depots and offices and the Listening in Action sessions which she attends with other senior managers as well as the Leader. Staff clearly appreciate this approach.

The Commitment to equality is evident from the fact that the Council has retained its equality team in the face of considerable budget cuts and restructuring in the organisation since 2010. There is now an opportunity to integrate the work of the equality team more into service development and public sector transformation by involving it in service design and strategy earlier.

“Our Manchester” is well understood by staff and it is driving a change of culture to one that is about listening and empowering staff. Partners have also recognised this. All the voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations that peers spoke to were complementary about the co-design of the new grant system which they feel allowed them to have greater input and to really influence the system that was introduced. The Council now has an opportunity to build on this success by reviewing the ways VCS organisations can continue to be involved in working with the council in the design and development of services. They would like to see opportunities for their involvement with the council streamlined in some way. They acknowledge the fast pace of change and recognise that they can’t always keep up with all the meetings they are asked to attend.

Budget and business planning is well integrated and there are service based equality delivery plans. Going forward the Council needs to consider how it can better align its equality objectives to its corporate objectives and make the connection more explicit. There needs to be a dual focus with “Our Manchester” mainstreaming the way inequalities are tackled, alongside a focus on specific inequalities with key equality performance indicators (KPIs) that are really stretching. The Equality Delivery Plans are a good start but they largely “playback” the generic high level ambitions of “Our Manchester” rather than focussing on the key inequalities and ways of delivering on these specific KPIs.

The City Council has adopted Inclusive Growth as a very explicit goal to help ensure that all residents can benefit from the considerable economic growth of the last twenty years. Whilst inclusive growth as a concept is positive, strategies are needed to ensure that the prosperity is shared by everyone, including disadvantaged groups and communities. Going forward the Council also needs to ensure that the strategy

has a strong connection to both the corporate and the equality objectives.

The Council could make better use of the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSEDs) to be more confident about tackling specific inequalities. Disability is one issue that needs to be a more specific priority for the Council. Staff seem rather shy of stating which groups are actually affected by inequality and the use of equalities language is rather old fashioned with references in documents to “equal opportunities” as opposed to “Equality and Diversity”. Several people we met gave the impression that equality considerations only covered minority groups or groups more likely to be oppressed by society, whereas the Equality Duty encourages a forensic examination of specific groups that are disadvantaged, because of a characteristic, and so protects the whole population. The Council has a good evidence base of data to identify gaps and trends to support its actions and adopting a more evidence based approach to talking about equalities should give people the confidence to be specific about the equalities in specific groups. To avoid generalising or stereotyping they can talk about “risks,” “disproportionately worse outcomes” etc. The Council might want to look at cultural competency tools as a way to build confidence about talking about equality issues.

Involving Your Communities

The resident and stakeholder engagement that took place for the development of “Our Manchester” was impressive. However, the move to online survey methods is not securing a balanced perspective and therefore the credibility of any resident views collected could be undermined. Certain groups such as women and white British appear to be over represented. Some alternative statistically sampled surveys by telephone or face to face might be needed to allow those who are less digitally able to have their say. The Council might consider setting up some sort of sampled representative citizen panel although we appreciate that these do take time and resources to set up and maintain. Supplementing this with qualitative research through focus groups would help to capture the voices of people from some under-represented groups.

There are some really good examples of engagement with communities:

- The Older Peoples Board and Forum has strong and diverse representation. It influenced the Employers Network’s introduction of a good practice guide for employing older people.
- The All Age Disability Plan is well understood by the VCS and the Council’s Work and Skills Team. It has led to good positive action to prepare disabled people for work via work tasters sessions and visits to the council.
- The Council has very strong relationships with the local LGBT community. A strong strategic partnership and engagement framework exists between the council and the LGBT Foundation.
- Work done to encourage a local small business private sector provider to recruit new employees from the area where they operate their business.

The Ward Improvement Partnerships seem to be a good way to intervene early to tackle cohesion issues, focusing on the problem (such as fly-tipping) rather than different communities blaming each other. However, the funding process for neighbourhood investment needs to be more open. There is a risk that the money is only going to those who understand the system and who may come back in

successive years. A way needs to be found to widen the participation of community groups. This will increase the diversity of access to these funds and so widen its impact. There is also no evaluation of how the £20k fund is spent and the potential for savings by avoiding duplication with council services. It is important for the council to be engaging with the people in diverse communities themselves rather than community leaders who may not represent their views.

Responsive Services and Customer Care

There were many good examples of responsive service delivery to diverse communities including:

- Extra care for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) elder residents which is part of an effort to improve residential care delivery for this protected characteristic group. The provision was designed with input from an LGBT elder reference group.
- The All Age Disability Plan which is an example of co-design with disabled people. It enables people to self-assess and order their own disability aids. The service will also be tested with people with a learning disability.
- The neighbourhood based approach to service delivery which allows the council to look at specific issues at ground level and to focus on where specific inequalities persist. Ward meetings in local areas direct activities such as rubbish clearing and street cleaning.

The Local Care Organisation (LCO) is an example of a strength based approach that has the potential to really make a difference to health outcomes in the city. It brings together hospital community services and primary GP care services with adult social care and other voluntary and community services at a local level. It will establish 12 neighbourhood teams which will each determine its own health priorities. The LCO is still in its infancy. It aims to focus on prevention and early intervention but this needs to be done in a way that understands the key drivers of inequality and maintains focus on dealing with borough wide cross cutting issues.

Since 2015 the Council has worked hard to increase the use of the Social Value Act to drive conversations with suppliers. It has increased the weighting given to social value considerations in the tendering process from 10% to 20%. Outcomes from this approach include suppliers creating 423 employment opportunities for hard to reach individuals, 705 apprenticeships and 1,160 jobs and nearly 69,000 hours of support to the VCS. Although spend with small and medium enterprises has increased from 46.6% to 59.4% since 2014/15, some representatives from the VCS still felt that the procurement process hampered opportunities for small companies. They felt that lessons could be learned from the co-design of grant funding process to reconsider procurement.

As prosperity in the City is increasing there needs to be some new thinking to address the lack of housing in the city. This includes exploring the issue of equal access to private sector housing. The private rented market is no longer meeting housing needs and the Council will need to be bold in the ways they intervene in the market. The issue may be a lack of housing or a lack of housing that the population on lower wages can afford. We heard concerns about the destitution and homelessness in the city, despite growing prosperity, and welcome the focus the

Council is giving this by having a senior post with leadership responsibility for homelessness. The Council could consider adopting a private sector landlord charter wherein a key factor is that landlords sign up to providing fit for purpose and affordable rented accommodation. A number of local authorities across the northwest and wider regions have established similar private sector landlord charters. The benefits have been far reaching not just for the potential tenants but also the private sector landlords who can advertise the fact that they are signatories.

Skilled and Committed Workforce

There are many strengths within the Council under this theme of the framework. The Council's focus on culture change is impressive and seemed to be understood by all levels of the organisation, partners and the voluntary sector. The values and behaviours they are describing are also closely aligned with Inclusive Leadership. "Our Manchester" has led to the adoption of new values such as more listening to and empowering of staff. The Council may want to explore this further and make the link between organisational culture and equalities and inclusion more explicit.

Staff said that they now feel more encouraged to be innovative and change how things are done, knowing they will be supported by their manager and will be able to learn from any mistakes that are The Council has a new People Strategy with a new approach. It pays the national Living Wage to all its staff including care staff. There are opportunities for staff to get involved in services in other parts of the Council. They can have up to three days paid leave to volunteer. Flexible working is promoted across the organisation and the Timewise Accreditation is being worked towards. A new "strengths based" appraisal process has been adopted called "About You" which includes 1:1 conversations between staff and managers. The response from staff has been positive.

The Council is well represented by women at senior management level with 75% of the senior management team being female. The appointment of the new Chief Executive is clearly having a positive impact on the workforce. Staff appreciate her background and personal style.

There are now more ways for front line staff to engage with senior leaders of the organisation. These include Listening in Action sessions at outlying offices and depots as well as staff conferences. Staff feel that the Council is now more open to challenge and criticism and receptive to change.

The Council appears to have a much more open approach to mental health. Although our observation was limited and mainly anecdotal, it is a positive story. People feel safe discussing their mental health.

The Council recognises that it has to do more to increase the representation of BAME people at a senior level in the organisation. There are more BAME people in the workforce overall than in 2015 but the percentage at a senior level has not increased. BAME people make up less than 10% of grades 10 and above. The peer team feel that the Council could take a bolder approach to this issue. It is introducing a coaching and mentoring scheme and has reserved some places for BME staff. The response from BAME staff was they would either want to have senior BAME role models in the organisation, and be mentored by senior BAME staff, or have some

form of external support to address this issue. A suggestion from peers is the North West Employers Inclusive Cultures Programme, which could possibly provide this for the Council. There was little other evidence of positive action to increase the numbers of BAME staff who could progress to senior posts. The organisation needs to consider urgently what type of positive action it could put in place to address this issue and maybe even consider having targets. We heard that apprentices are very diverse and that in time some should progress into more senior roles. Clearly this is a long term strategy. A quicker strategy could be affected by ring-fencing some of the graduate trainee roles for BAME trainees and using positive action to recruit to them.

The Council needs to consider how it can support staff equality networks to develop in terms of their structure, function and role within the organisation. Previously there were three networks: Disability; LGBT and BAME. The corporate BAME group no longer meets, although a directorate based network has started in Adults which may be replicated in Children's. Members of the corporate group suggest that a lack of capacity and support for attendees was a problem.

Reasonable adjustments are not consistently understood by managers. The organisation could consider developing a disability passport which staff could take with them when changing roles to help their new manager understand their condition and their needs for reasonable adjustments.

The Council needs to consider how it can refresh its equality training offer. "Our Manchester" should be linked to training especially for new starters. Although equality e-learning is mandatory for staff, more needs to be done to enforce this more robustly. It can also be several years since some staff received any training. We feel that some refresher training for all staff should be provided. Unconscious Bias training is being introduced for staff who are involved in recruitment and selection. We welcome this and would suggest that it is extended to anyone who manages staff.

The Trade Unions overall were very positive about relationships with managers in the Council. They are concerned about a lack of consistency around issues like reasonable adjustments and flexible working. They also want to be involved in developing new proposals for staff much earlier.

Finally, once again, we would like to thank Manchester City Council for commissioning this peer challenge and to everyone involved for their participation. The team are particularly grateful for the support provided both in the preparation for the Peer Challenge and during the on-site phase and for the way people we met engaged with the process.

All of us connected with the Peer Challenge would like to wish Manchester City Council every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gill Elliott

Peer Support Adviser

Local Government Association

Appendix C: Workforce Equality Review Final Report

Manchester City Council Workforce Equality Review

Background

Manchester City Council (MCC) is committed to demonstrating equality and inclusion in its workforce and is already performing at a very high standard on this front, as evidenced by the organisation currently holding the 'Excellent' level accreditation of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

However, MCC want to continue to make progress in this area and aim to lead by example for the rest of Manchester in regards to everyday equality and diversity in the workplace.

Previous research conducted by MCC has revealed that the workforce face some issues and concerns, specifically in relation to equality issues statistically (i.e. underrepresentation of BAME and disabled employees throughout the grading structure, an ageing workforce etc.) and there is also anecdotal evidence of the wider workplace issues around equality from engagement with equality network groups.

However, there are gaps in knowledge and understanding and as such MCC are keen to gain a better understanding of any other areas of concern or perceived ineffectiveness through more research.

To that extent, a programme of primary market research was commissioned to conduct a detailed and focused review of your equality activities with members of your workforce across various employee identities, grades and locations.

The research goal is to enable MCC to better understand how effective your employees think you are in the areas of equality and inclusion, by exploring their first-hand experiences, perceptions and attitudes.

The research will also generate knowledge of your workforce's understanding and awareness of your stance on equality, the measures in place, and achievements so far, as well as revealing ideas and suggestions for improvement on how to make further advances or address any present concerns.

Key research objectives

The results of this review will be considered by MCC and benchmarked against your existing practice and best practice in the field, in order to inform an action plan produced in partnership with key stakeholders to address identified issues.

Specifically, the objectives of this research project are to:

- Identify what's currently working well in the areas of equality and inclusion, as well as areas for improvement or development.
- Understand perceptions of what good practice is in the areas of equality and inclusion, how this can be delivered and whether it is currently being delivered.

- Ascertain awareness and understanding of the role of inclusion and equitability in the delivery of the 'Our Manchester' and 'Our People' initiatives.
- Identify how best to engage the workforce in ongoing discussions, developments and delivery of equality within the Council.
- Assess perceptions on who has responsibility for delivering effective equality practice, where the support needs to come from and how the manager/employee relationship can be utilised effectively to deliver this.

Wider context

Diversity is high on the agenda and is referenced in most workplace trends for 2018.

Employers in both the public and private sectors are more focused than ever on attracting and retaining a diverse workforce and everything is pointing to diversity being taken much more seriously in 2018. As such, many organisations are expected to revisit their policies and approach to diversity.

To ensure a happy and productive workforce, organisations are looking to improve their human resourcing processes as a whole, from identifying recruitment issues and challenges (reducing unconscious bias) through to assessing training needs (reviewing the opportunities available) then through to career progression (ensuring fairness and transparency).

One case of this recently highlighted in the media was the racial training for staff at Starbucks, where two members of the public were arrested following racial judgements made by staff members. The instant reaction to this situation by the public highlights the importance of issues like these in our society.

There is the opinion that a focus on diversity will have numerous benefits to organisations, including increased community engagement, better employee satisfaction and retention rates, more creativity and innovation and ultimately a happier and more diverse workforce.

Inequality is a hot topic right now and the UK is making strides to address the gender pay gap.



The UK has recently undertaken a data gathering exercise that, to date, is unrivalled anywhere else in the world. Over 10,000 UK companies published statistics on the gender pay gaps in their businesses, which revealed structural inequality of

opportunities within the workplace and will therefore force employers to look at the barriers facing women's progression in the workplace.

According to the government's gender pay gap reporting, on average, three-quarters of large UK businesses pay men more than their female counterparts. (Source: The Financial Times)

Although the recent attention to this issue has been positive, there is still a great deal of work to be done in regards to how the findings of this research will be used to address inequality in the future.

Societal movements encourage more people to speak out and address the issues of inequality head on.

Campaigning on issues such as gender, sexuality and race is nothing new – people have been fighting for equal rights for centuries. However, such issues have never been as pertinent as in 2018.

#MeToo, #TimesUp, #BlackLivesMatter, #WomensMarch, #LGBTRights, #IllRideWithYou, #TransLivesMatter.



These are just a fraction of the hashtags used over recent years to promote and highlight societal movement campaigns, whereby people across the world are joining forces about common issues faced.

As campaigns of this type gather momentum and people are encouraged to speak up and share their experiences it is a necessity that diversity and equality is promoted within the workplace, and that any relevant issues are addressed with empathy and confidence.

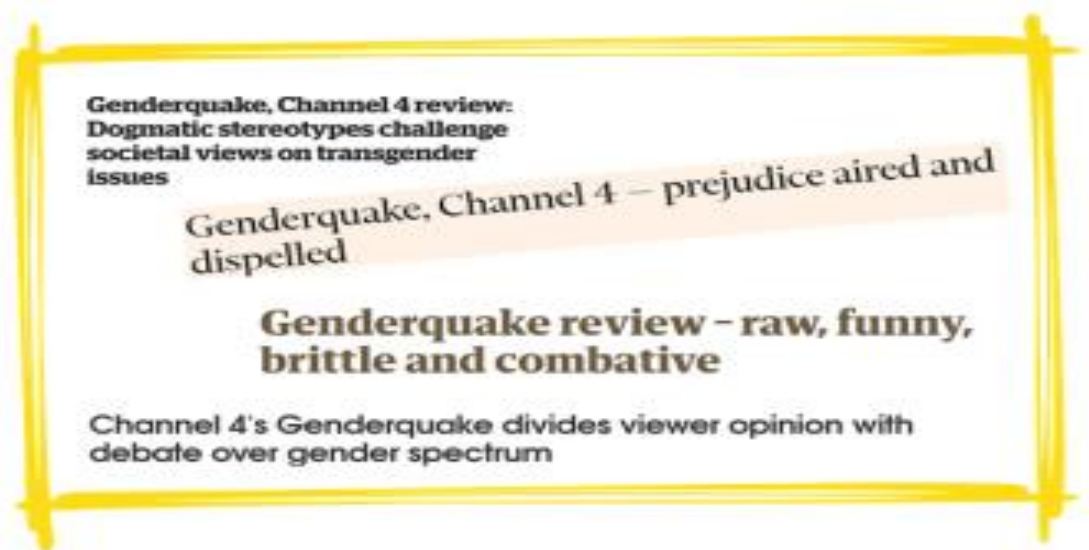
"It does seem timely that this has been done and I'm sure it's been done for all the obvious reasons in terms of press coverage and me too and that sort of thing and it is good that the city council are doing this."

Council employee

Times are constantly changing. Although the term 'LGBT' was once considered inclusive, it is no longer considered as politically correct. The acronym has now been extended to LGBTQI +.

Whilst some acronyms contain up to 12 letters, the one that is becoming more common practice is LGBTQI+. In addition to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transsexual there is now queer or questioning, intersex and + which ensures that the description is always inclusive of all identities.

In early May 2018, a two part documentary was aired on channel 4 (Genderquake) that aimed to bring the issues of gender and identity to the forefront. In the series, a group of eleven millennials with various gender identities lived in a house together for a week with the aim of challenging any prejudices amongst themselves and assess how perceptions can differ within older generations.



The series received critical acclaim and was considered to be thought provoking – the fact that people can be anywhere on the gender spectrum and that this is often fluid as opposed to static not only challenged the perceptions of those taking part but also of the wider viewing audience.

What we did

The agreed methodology for the research initially was for MCC to recruit volunteer participants from their employee base, and for Mustard to conduct 4 x 120-minute workshops, each including 8-10 staff members. Alongside this, it was agreed that Mustard would also conduct 42 one-to-one depth interviews which would each last twenty minutes.

It is common for methodologies to alter slightly once research has begun based on insight revealed during the process, and this was the situation with this particular project. After recruitment had started, it became apparent that workshops were particularly difficult to recruit for, and that one-to-one interviews were much easier and preferred by participants (although they were lasting much longer than the estimated twenty minutes on average).

Given this, it was agreed that Mustard would instead focus on one-to-one interviews (although one workshop was still conducted). The breakdown of how many people

were spoken to in various formats is provided in the table below, and based on this, it is estimated Mustard spent approximately 28 hours in total engaging with employees (in comparison to the 22 hours they would have spent engaging with employees with the previous methodology).

Method of engagement	Number of employees
Workshop	6
One-to-one interviews	44
Face-to-face	23
Telephone	21
Total	50

It was also agreed that Mustard would ensure a variety of different staff grades and types were included in the research, with employees self-selecting which aspects they wished to discuss equality and diversity before engaging with the research team. The aim initially was to ensure a mix across BAME, disabled and LGBTQI+ groups, but the self-selected aspects were much broader than this, as shown in the below table. (Please note the total sums to more than the 50 employees engaged with as research participants could self-select multiple aspects to discuss).

Self-selected area for discussion	Number of employees
BME	15
LGBT	9
Disability	18
Work location	16
Women	2
Age	3
Part-time work	2

Grade of employee	Number of employees
Grade 1 - 4	11

Grade 5 - 8	29
Grade 9 - 12	8
SS01 and above	2

Fieldwork was conducted from 8th – 27th April 2018, and all interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes. All fieldwork and analysis was conducted by the research team at Mustard to ensure an unbiased and independent review of the situation regarding equality and diversity within the MCC workforce.

Executive Summary

On a general level, Manchester City Council is performing well in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly when compared to other companies across Manchester. All recognised the current diversity of the workforce and acknowledged the lengths MCC had gone to welcome all regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

The external recruitment process was highly praised by most, saying its anonymous approach sets a precedent to all other organisations. Having all identifiable information removed from applications was seen as a truly inclusive method.

Having numerous channels which allowed staff to have their say and give feedback to the Council was just one way MCC currently shows good practice. 'Be Heard,' 'Staff Surveys,' 'Listening in Action,' one to one sessions with managers and 'Our Manchester' were all initiatives staff recognised as helping the Council be a progressive and inclusive workplace.

Frequent cultural celebrations, recognition of national days, supporting movements, and allowing volunteer days for staff (Our People) were just some of the initiatives employees further praised. Although all were successful at promoting the Council's support of equality and diversity, there is further need for promotion (both internally and externally) in order for the whole workforce to feel included.

The new Chief Executive, Joanne Roney, was praised by most employees, specifically in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion. Her recognition of areas MCC needs to improve on in order to be truly inclusive (particularly seeing more BAME and women in senior roles and making locations outside the Town Hall Extension feel included) sets a clear message that equality and diversity is a priority.

For most employees, the changes they wanted to see are already in place and just need further work to improve. This puts MCC in a positive and successful position to make the improvements staff want to see.

The definition of equality is changing, with most staff saying it is not just about being treated the same, but about giving people the same opportunities in order for them to be treated fairly. It is important for the Council to recognise their staff are individuals and therefore should be supported in different ways depending on their needs.

Training was also an area many felt MCC could improve on. Firstly, ensuring that equality and diversity training is mandatory and something that is constantly

refreshed would strengthen perceptions that MCC is making equality a priority. Staff also felt that training was something all employees should be engaging with in order to tackle unconscious bias.

Further training for BAME staff was also an initiative many felt MCC needed to make a priority. Due to the lack of diversity in senior roles, ensuring training sessions are truly inclusive would allow for BAME staff to get the support they need to progress within the organisation.

Both 'Our Manchester' and 'Our People' have been successful at creating awareness of equality and diversity at MCC. Both were front of mind for many employees and as both were frequently praised, it appears they are having the desired effect.

The 'Our People' initiative was commonly referred to as a volunteering scheme, rather than by name, suggesting further clarity is needed in what else 'Our People' entails. Others failed to connect 'Our People' and volunteering together, suggesting there is potential branding confusion.

Despite this, the volunteering scheme was specifically praised by many employees. Providing staff with the opportunity to take volunteer days was not only allowing staff to give back to their community, but was also helping celebrate equality and inclusion.

Volunteering aided in:

- Allowing staff to better themselves personally by helping others,
- Allowing staff to learn new skills that can be transferred back to their day to day work,
- Building confidence,
- Understand things from others point of view (be that religion, background, disadvantage etc.)

Some did mention ways in which 'Our People' could improve, firstly by allowing staff more volunteer days. Some feared three days was not enough time to have a lasting impact on communities or to engage for themselves. There were further suggestions that the Council should be encouraging staff to 'go out of their comfort zone' when it came to the areas staff volunteered in. There were concerns staff were volunteering in areas that didn't challenge them and therefore some were not receiving the full benefits.

MCC has many successful initiatives in place which are currently successful at engaging with staff, for example; Be Heard, Staff Surveys, One to One sessions with managers, Listening in Action sessions and Staff Groups.

However, many were frustrated feeling the Council is encouraging them to talk are but failing to listen; suggesting there are issues with 'closing the loop.' There is a need for the Council and the Equalities Team to further communicate back to staff, particularly those who engage. Staff need to know they have been heard and it is important for the Council to converse further with staff, letting them know what changes have been, or will be, made.

There were further concerns that communications on equality and diversity are being lost due to overwhelming volumes of emails or busy workloads. Allowing employees to 'subscribe' to the equalities team could help in making sure messages are getting to the right people (be this via emails or online bulletin boards).

Listening in Action sessions were recognised as successfully engaging staff. There were suggestions for the equalities team to be more active by holding their own Listening in Action sessions in order to allow the consultation of staff in regards to changes, needs and creating new policies. Making sure staff are included in conversations, specifically regarding changes and policies that directly impact on them, will reassure staff that the Council is thinking of the 'person behind the policy'.

Reengaging the Staff Groups would be a successful way of engaging with staff. There is currently confusion in the purpose of some of these groups; therefore there is a need for better communication in regards to what the Groups discuss, do and achieve. Further to this, many were concerned with how some of the staff groups have been tarnished with negative perceptions. These need to be addressed before people will re-engage.

Finally, continuously showing how equality and diversity is a priority of the Council's is crucial in order to keep staff engaged. The Chief Executive is instrumental in making sure staff do not feel this is falling by the wayside. Along with this, ensuring those less noticeable (those outside of the Town Hall Extension, those working part-time, those slightly older) are being included is critical to making sure everyone engages and feels like part of the MCC community.

There was confusion with regards to who is currently responsible for ensuring equality is delivered within MCC with many being unaware that the Equalities Team sat within HR. Many were also unsure of the Equalities Team's current focus.

It was clear however that HR, the Equalities team, and management in general should all be working together in order to ensure all staff feel equal and receive necessary support. It is crucial that all three are successfully and frequently communicating with staff in order for the Council to show they are active in equality and diversity.

Ultimately, managers are representing MCC's standpoint on equality and diversity to staff. It is therefore critical to make sure all managers are reflecting the correct message. Those who have managers who focus on equality and diversity had positive perceptions of how successful MCC is as an organisation overall. Those whose managers are less understanding tend to have a negative perception on MCC's performance.

Many agreed that management should be the first point of call when it comes to accessing support, however some feared that those with poor relationships with their managers would not feel comfortable turning to them. Many recognised the importance of having a dedicated support team.

Not only would this team be able to support junior staff, it could also be an initiative that managers could turn to if needed. Many recognised that managers were struggling with their own workloads and therefore could not dedicate the necessary time to supporting staff. Others understood that managers could not possibly know

everything when it came to giving support (particularly when it came to complex disability issues).

What Equality and Diversity means to the MCC workforce?

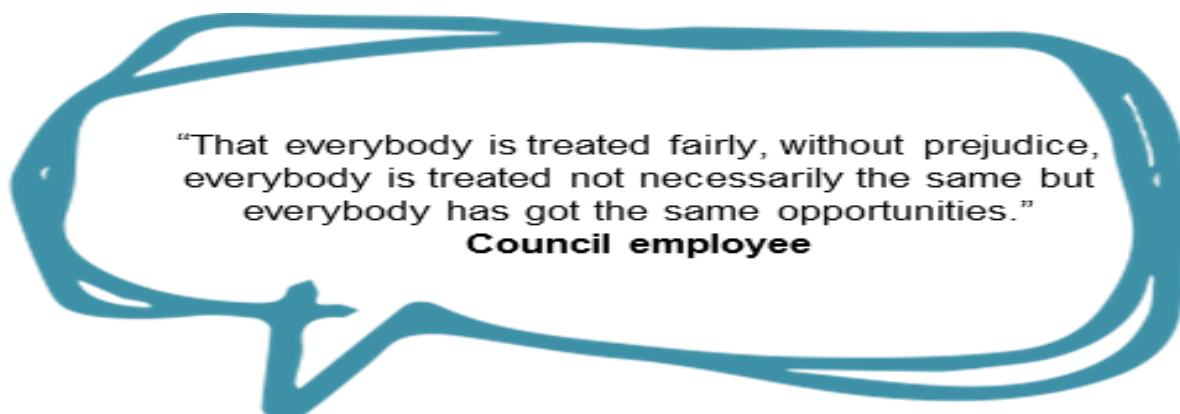
All employees involved in this research understood the importance of equality and diversity in the workplace, recognising that they should go hand in hand and should be at the forefront of the Council's agenda.

When prompted, diversity in the workplace was not only about making sure that people from all backgrounds were accepted in the Council (for example gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion and disability) but was also about accepting that the workforce have diverse working styles and individual needs. Many stressed the importance in accepting that everyone has their own working styles and strengths and this is something that the Council should be encouraging.

Overall, employees felt the Council were exceeding expectations in terms of recruiting a diverse workforce. All recognised that the workforce had a unique mix and that this was something that the Council should be praised for as well as further celebrate and promote. However, many were worried that this diversity was not representative across all grades or within senior roles.

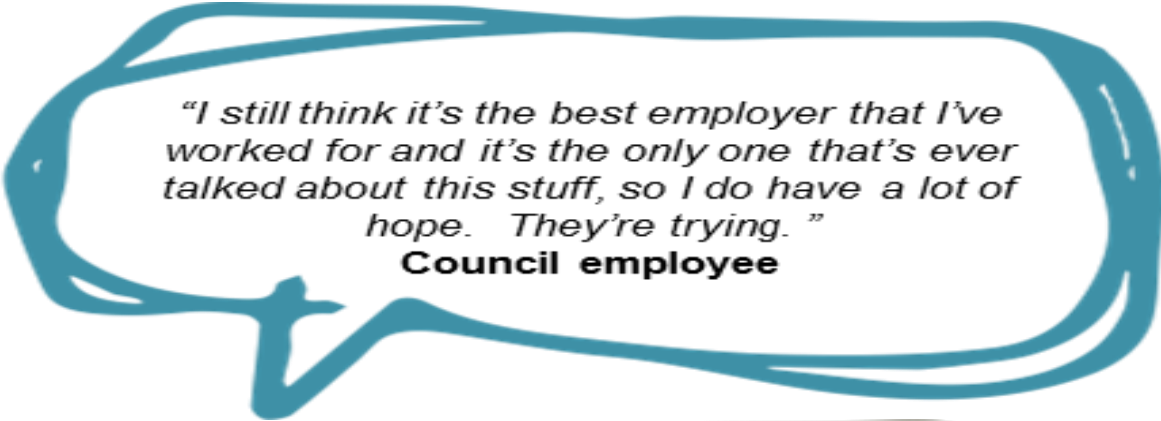
There were also concerns that the Council were not quite hitting the mark with diversity in working styles. There was a common perception that the Council 'has a way that things should be done' and managers were not accepting, encouraging, or promoting different working styles. Some staff felt stifled when it came to letting their creativity show, whilst others felt they were not encouraged to play to their working strengths, but rather told to follow [potentially] outdated working procedures. Encouraging managers to accept and celebrate that everyone works in different manners, especially considering the size of the workforce, would improve perceptions of achieving diversity in the workplace. The Council being more flexible in its working style was something that was encouraged by the majority of employees we spoke to.

The perception that equality means that everyone is treated 'equally' is increasingly seen as outdated. Employees recognised that making people feel equal is ensuring that people are treated in the way they want or need to be treated, rather than being treated the **same**. Allowing flexibility and recognising that employee working needs are different is something the Council needs to ensure it is doing in order to make all staff feel truly equal.

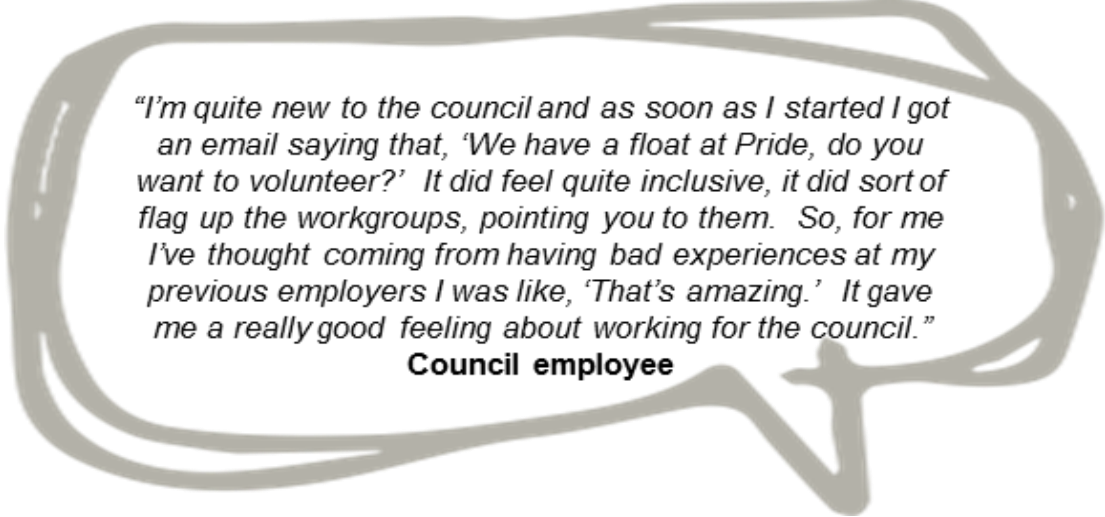


What is working well at MCC?


Most staff said, on a general level, that MCC is performing well in terms of inclusion, equality, and diversity, particularly in comparison to other companies or previous employers. Almost all recognised the diverse workforce that was currently working within the Council, praising its external recruitment process in ensuring everyone had an equal chance of being welcomed into the Council. All new starters we spoke to praised how quickly they had felt included and recognised how the Council was somewhere that encourages diversity.



"I still think it's the best employer that I've worked for and it's the only one that's ever talked about this stuff, so I do have a lot of hope. They're trying."
Council employee



"I'm quite new to the council and as soon as I started I got an email saying that, 'We have a float at Pride, do you want to volunteer?' It did feel quite inclusive, it did sort of flag up the workgroups, pointing you to them. So, for me I've thought coming from having bad experiences at my previous employers I was like, 'That's amazing.' It gave me a really good feeling about working for the council."
Council employee

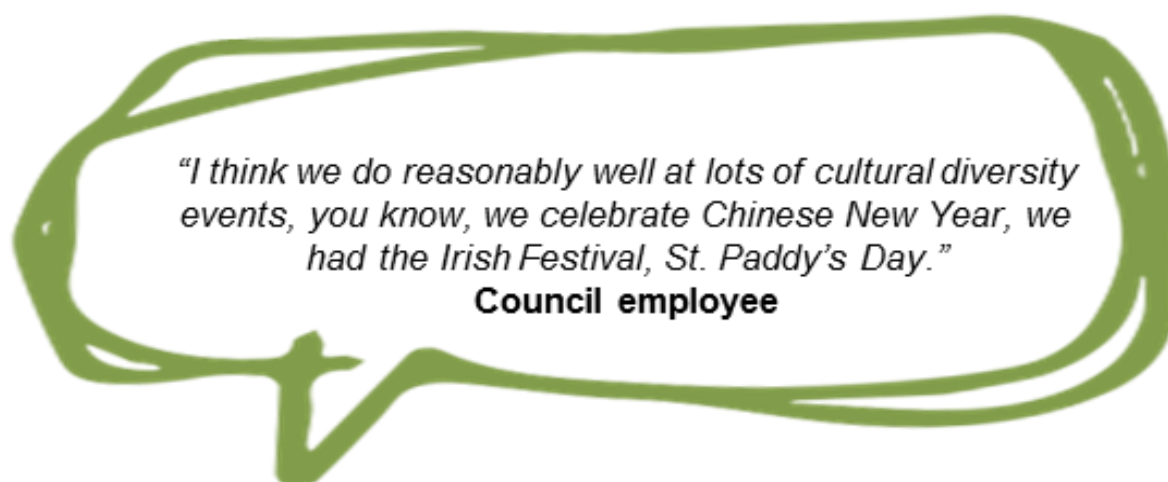


"It was just always really clear from day one that it was important for the council and that these were important issues. So that always gave me hope that it was a good employer because they were talking about these issues and they were saying that these issues are important to us."
Council employee

Along with this, the majority of staff we consulted with praised the Council for frequently giving the whole workforce the opportunity to have their say. Most recognised this was a benefit they may not have if they worked in other organisations or other sectors. They appreciated that it was rare for organisations (particularly ones as large as MCC) to allow their staff to feedback concerns, desires, and recommendations for improvement.


The number of opportunities, routes and channels available to staff allowing them to be 'listened to' was celebrated. 'Be Heard', 'Listening in Action sessions' and one to one sessions with managers all allowed staff to have their say, in turn making them feel included and like they had an equal opportunity to make a difference.

Frequent celebrations of cultural events were also something most staff recognised MCC were performing well on. These celebrations not only prompted awareness of other cultures but also helped set a precedent for the Council's attitude towards welcoming all and promoting the inclusion of all communities. Pride, Chinese New Year, Eid, St Patrick's Day and International Women's Day were just some of the events people recalled being involved in recently through the Council.



Although most staff spoke about these events in a positive light, some felt the council risked playing to stereotypes. Others felt there were further opportunities for the Council to advertise their involvement in these events (e.g. make it clear they are hosting / associated with any cultural events), ensuring the Council shows its pride in their involvement. There was also a concern that the Town Hall Extension was more frequently included in these celebrations than other Council locations, therefore there is scope to promote celebrations in locations outside of the city centre.

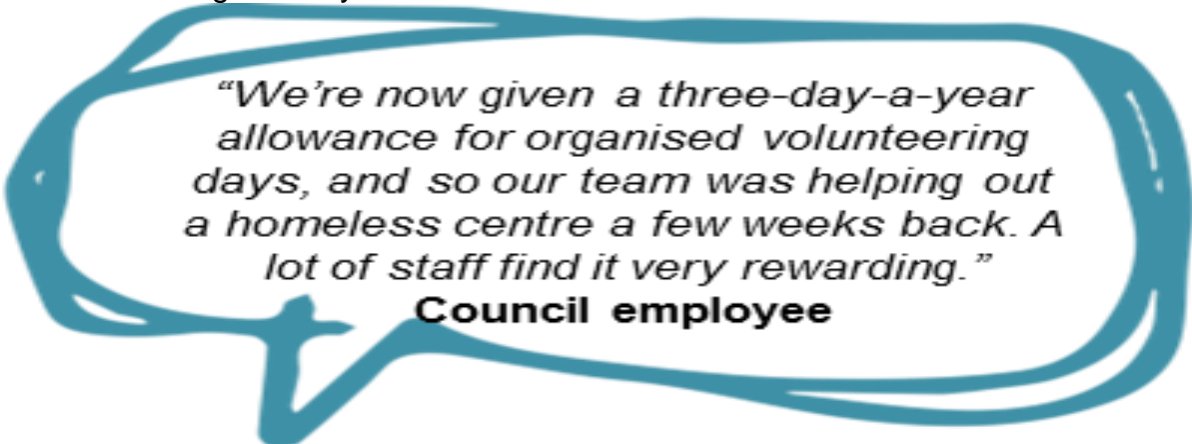
The new CEO, Joanne Roney, was praised by many as having a positive impact on the Council, especially in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion. Her "human" approach was praised by staff from all groups, with many appreciating that she is accepting that the Council has more to do. This is especially true when it comes to BAME staff and women in senior roles. In order for the Council's workforce to be truly inclusive and representative of the wider Manchester community, a clear message of making equality and diversity in the Council a priority should continue to be heard by staff.



"We were out on the steps this morning for the one-minute silence. So she invited people to go out. She came around in here, said hi to everybody in the department, whoever was there on the day when she arrived and they took some photos and that. It was nice that she came around and introduced herself, was smiley and we thought "Oh she's nice" you know. She's probably very tough but she sent a "thank you" email afterwards to say it was lovely meeting you all".

Council employee

Others praised the Council's efforts in allowing staff to give back to the community. Providing all staff with the opportunity to take volunteer days was another way of ensuring the Council celebrated equality and inclusion. This scheme was praised, not only for allowing staff to give back to the community (which in turn improves the general view of the MCC from the public's point of view) but aided in allowing staff to better themselves personally by helping others. Further to this, it allowed staff members to learn new skills that can be transferred back to their day to day work. Those that had taken advantage of the volunteer programme praised how it had helped them not only build their confidence but also helped them in terms of seeing things from other points of view. Helping those less fortunate than themselves, interacting with people from different backgrounds, or spending time with people who had encountered completely different experiences than themselves helped MCC employees understand the needs of others and aided in appreciating the importance of understanding diversity.



"We're now given a three-day-a-year allowance for organised volunteering days, and so our team was helping out a homeless centre a few weeks back. A lot of staff find it very rewarding."

Council employee

Some mentioned ways of improving this process by allowing for more volunteer days and a proportion of the staff we spoke to felt three days was not enough time to have a lasting impact on communities and the staff member themselves. There were also some concerns that people were 'sticking to what they know' and there is potential for the Council to encourage staff to go out of their comfort zone when it comes to the areas they volunteered in.

Overall, the Council was viewed as an organisation that is leading the way for the rest of the city, however, there is still a lot that could be done to make perceptions of working in the Council more positive and for staff to feel included and heard.

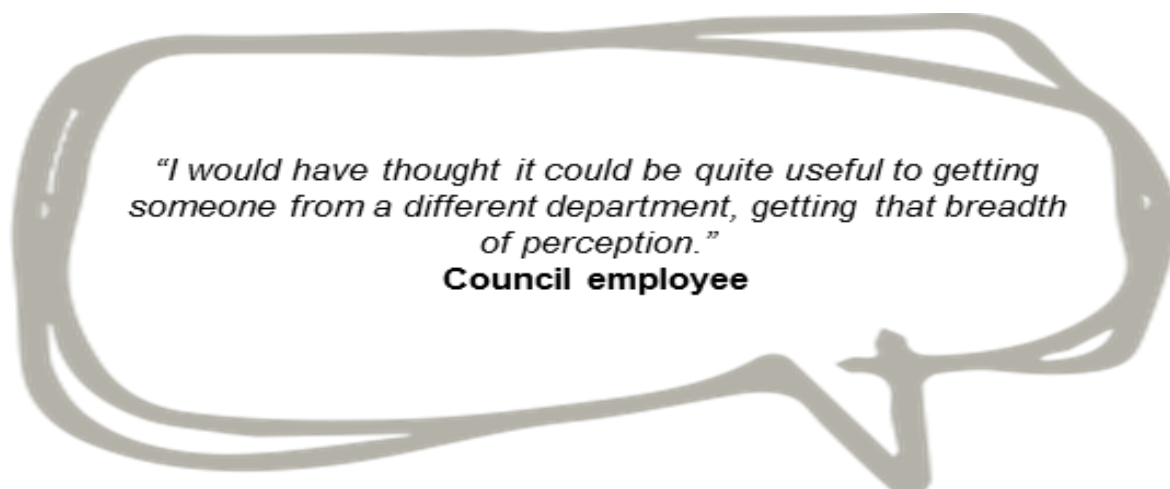
What is working less well at MCC?

There were several areas where staff members felt there could be improvements to how the council tackles equality and diversity.

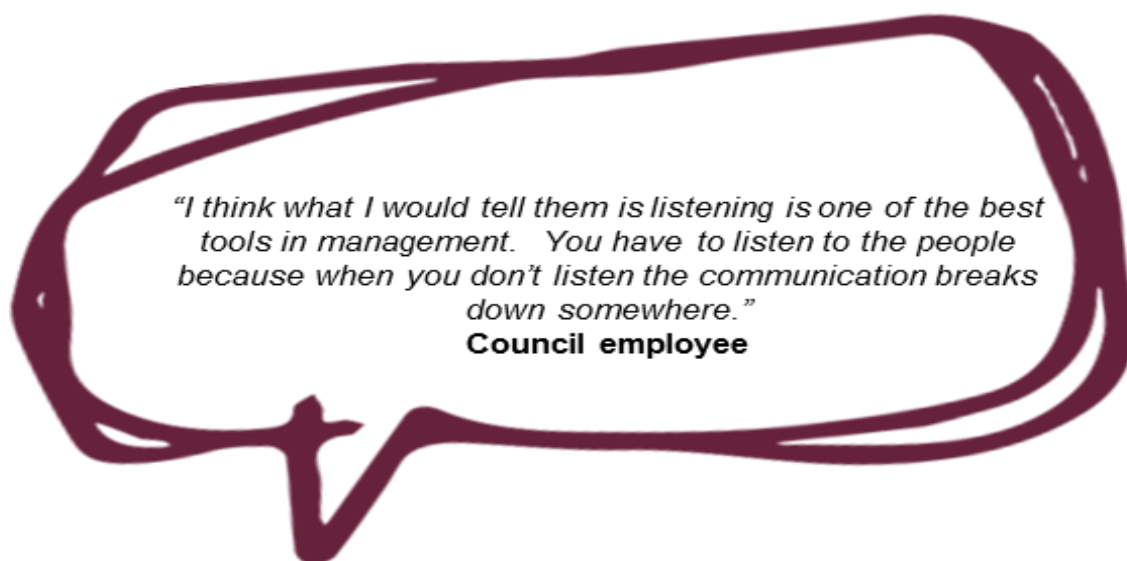
Although MCC was recognised for its inclusion of staff from different communities, backgrounds and needs, there was an overwhelming under representation of BAME staff in higher grades. Almost all the staff we spoke to, from both BAME and non-BAME backgrounds, recognised the need to see more progression for these colleagues. Many felt that without a diverse senior level, the Council would never meet the expectations of an organisation that is truly reflective on the Manchester community. Without seeing BAME staff in these roles, MCC could never be a truly diverse organisation.

Many were also concerned about the internal recruitment process. Although external recruitment was seen as something the Council was performing well on, when it came to progression within the organisation, many felt there was a culture of 'who you knew' being more beneficial than 'what you knew.' Although this perception was strongly felt by BAME participants, staff members from all backgrounds and characteristics recognised how the Council were failing to make this a fair and equal process.

When asked how this process could be improved in order to ensure MCC delivered good practice, a large proportion of staff questioned the validity of the current recruitment panels. Firstly, there was concern as to how reflective or unbiased a panel could be if it lacked diversity. Many noted how most panels were made up of senior staff of similar make-up who could unconsciously hire those who mirrored their own ethnicity or background. Further to this, there was a strong perception that the Council were failing to prevent recruitment bias as it was not currently mandatory to have interdepartmental panel members. Employees felt this led to frequently unjustified decisions when it came to recruitment. Having panel members from other departments involved in this process ensures honest conversations are had about applicants; guaranteeing accountability and rationality in all recruitment decisions.



Staff also praised MCC for allowing them multiple opportunities to have their say, however there is concern the Council are failing to actually 'listen'. For the majority of the employees initiatives such as 'Be Heard', 'Staff Surveys' and frequent one to one sessions with managers were starting to feel more like 'tick box exercises' rather than real opportunities to be heard. There is a risk of frustration turning to anger if MCC continues to ask for staff opinions without these communications leading to action. The Council risks falling under the remit of 'The Psychology of the false promise,' whereby failure to deliver or act on staff concerns is more detrimental to the perception of the Council than failing to allow staff the opportunity to have their say altogether.



For most it was a matter of closing the loop. Doing this would not only mean taking action on the feedback MCC receives from these channels, but also means communicating back to those that engaged. Whether or not MCC is currently acting on the feedback it receives, the need for further communication from the Council is essential to ensuring MCC is demonstrating good practice when it comes to equality and inclusion. Currently, staff believe MCC are failing to take action as messages of change are not reaching those that want to know. If the suggestions received are not achievable, good practice includes feeding this message back to staff. MCC employees understand not all change is attainable, however, explaining why not is just as important to staff as seeing effective change.

Training opportunities were also something staff felt the Council was performing less well on. Not only were BAME staff concerned about the lack of training and support available to them, many were concerned about a lack of training available to staff below senior level. There were doubts whether MCC's current training process was being a truly inclusive one due to many feeling opportunities were more likely be given to those in higher levels that potentially didn't need it. In order to see MCC as a truly progressive organisation, there needs to be a push for training being offered as a step for genuine development, rather than helping the successful climb higher.

Further to this, most staff we spoke to were concerned with the lack of mandatory equality and diversity training. Most struggled to remember if they had ever completed training sessions, and if they did, those that undertook training in the last year were few and far between. Almost all employees stressed the need to have

frequent equality and diversity training in order for MCC to achieve good practice. Although equality training was stressed as a necessity for management, all staff recognised the positive effect this training would have if all employees undertook such training.

A common frustration concerned middle management, with perceptions on how managers approached creating equal workforces being polarised. Although some praised the level of support and understanding they received from managers, many recognised that there were inconsistencies in management styles across the Council. There appeared to be more employees frustrated with management than those that felt they were receiving the necessary support.



Understandably, many claimed their main perception of how MCC is dealing with equality and diversity comes from their interactions with middle management, who, according to employees, should be the Council's biggest advocates of equality and diversity policies and practices.

However, most gave examples and anecdotes of situations where this wasn't the case. It was also apparent that employees believed the Council may have been sending out communications related to equality and diversity, and may have different policies and procedures in place, but that middle managers were acting more as barriers than supporters of this information by withholding it from other staff.

When asked for ways in which this could be improved in the future, examples included ensuring manager styles are more consistent across all managers, perhaps informed by training and education of how that style should look. It was mentioned that a more consistent style of managing might also eradicate the problem of some managers being more obviously favourable towards some employees than others. A bigger degree of flexibility was also suggested by many, and the acknowledgement that all employees are different to one another and need different types of support and assistance from their managers.

Many were unaware that the Equalities Team sat within HR. There was also confusion about who was responsible for delivering effective practice. Some felt equality and diversity fell under the remit of HR whilst others felt the Equalities Team should be accountable for ensuring inclusion is a priority. Increased viability of the Equalities Team could help reduce this confusion. However, most were in agreement that both teams should be working together to ensure messages on equality and diversity were delivered successfully.

Along with this, many stressed the need for consulting with staff when it came to creating new policies. Many noted frustrations when measures were put in place without understanding the needs of the employees these would affect. Communication to staff in regards to when these new policies would be discussed, along with giving staff the opportunity to input their ideas was something staff felt was necessary in making them feel included. Many felt that the Equalities Team holding their own listening and action sessions would be a successful way for their ideas to be heard.

Although many noted management should be the first point of call when it came to accessing support, some feared that those with poor relationships would not feel comfortable turning to their managers when they needed. Many suggested that it would be useful to have a dedicated support team (which could be an internal or external) solely dedicated to supporting staff in equality and diversity matters. Further to this, communication on the support systems currently in place should be extremely clear.

The intranet was frequently mentioned as a channel that could be used for this but is not currently being used to the best of its ability. Most staff were frustrated at how busy and confusing the intranet was, suggesting there is a need for clarity and direction in where employees can find the information they desire.

Overall, the changes employees want to see are already readily available within the Council. Instead of people asking for large, timely, and costly changes, we frequently heard “we want more of...”, “we want this to be better,” and “we want this to be amended.” Overall, it appears that the council is in a positive and successful starting position to make the improvements employees want to see.

Opinions on MCC’s equality and diversity across characteristics

LGBTQI+

The vast majority of LGBTQI+ employees we consulted agreed the council is a fair, equal, and inclusive organisation; with most saying it was the most inclusive place they’ve worked.

Although the Council has made positive strides in the past with regards to supporting the LGBTQI+ workforce, giving them a voice and support network to access, there is a sense the Council are missing important opportunities to showcase their support for this group and proactively promote inclusivity. A number of employees mention that, although recognising the Council’s involvement in Pride was a great start, there was more that could be done to advertise the Councils connection to the celebration. Simple suggestions such as making logos more prominent and ensuring all Council

locations are contributing to the celebrations could help the LGBTQI+ community feel more included.

"As equality goes, you don't see the Council's branding or the Council generally associated with events, for example, Manchester Pride. Their link there is pretty much non-existent and as far as I can remember always has been."

Council employee

"You see the logo on Pride events but it's really tiny in the corner and they should be the ones pushing it because Manchester is their city. You just don't get that and it doesn't feel like it's something that they are particularly affiliated with."

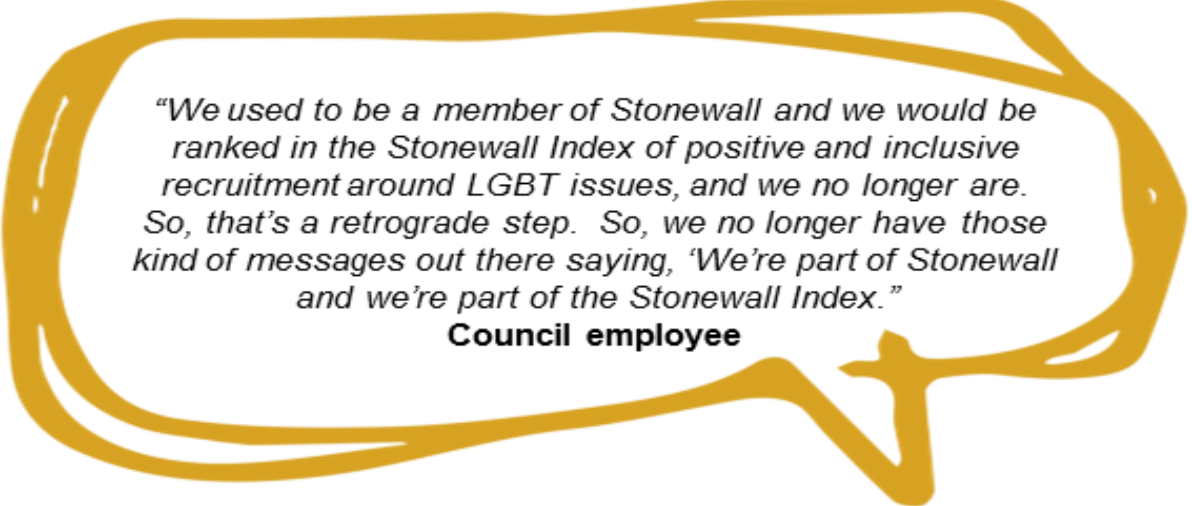
Council employee

Although few of the LGBTQI+ employees we consulted with have ever experienced any first-hand homophobia, there were subtle undertones of unsupportive behaviour with one employee referencing that other colleagues were reluctant to "come out" to their managers. Another felt there was nothing proactively being done to highlight issues related to homophobia within the Council and a third employee said those in locations outside the Town Hall Extension do not experience the same levels of inclusion as those in the centre.

"[On the council promoting not being homophobic] I don't think there's anything proactive that's done to ensure that. So, I guess the only way that I feel comfortable is because I know the people who are here and because I've never experienced anything, that is homophobic, but I'm not sure what measures are in place to ensure that balance is maintained."

Council employee

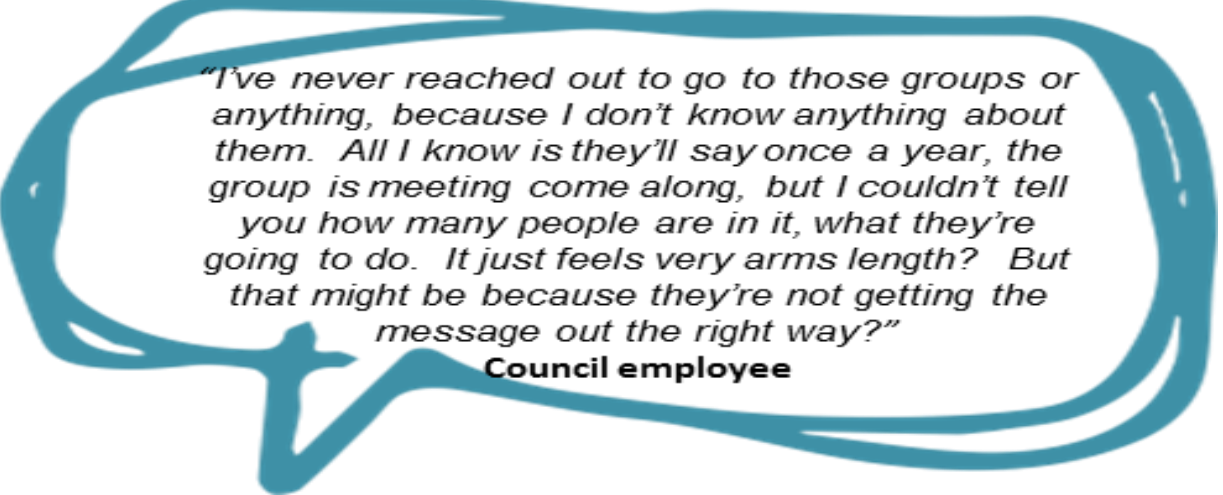
There was also the sense that the LGBTQI+ Staff Group is losing the support it needs to have any acclaim within the Council. The lack of a Chair has frustrated members; with many feeling it has diluted the group's credibility. Although most understood the conversation and decision to move away from the Stonewall Workplace Index, a few still feel this was a step backwards for the Council, therefore there may be further need to communicate the reasoning behind this decision.



"We used to be a member of Stonewall and we would be ranked in the Stonewall Index of positive and inclusive recruitment around LGBT issues, and we no longer are. So, that's a retrograde step. So, we no longer have those kind of messages out there saying, 'We're part of Stonewall and we're part of the Stonewall Index.'"

Council employee

Although the majority were aware of the LGBTQI+ Staff Group, there are some employees that claim to be unaware of the group and / or its purpose. Some felt the group was not relevant to them as they take place in a different location to where they are based. There was also the suggestion that these groups are not being promoted effectively and that communication around what is on the agenda could be improved. Some struggled with the 'social' aspects of these groups, saying they had turned to the group for support but it was more of a 'get together' than a group that sets out to make a difference within the Council.



"I've never reached out to go to those groups or anything, because I don't know anything about them. All I know is they'll say once a year, the group is meeting come along, but I couldn't tell you how many people are in it, what they're going to do. It just feels very arms length? But that might be because they're not getting the message out the right way?"

Council employee

There was also a suggestion the Town Hall could be lit up red to highlight World Aid's Day, as they light it up for other occasions.



"When it's World Aid's Day for example, I can't think that the Town Hall has been lit up in red the same as they would light it up for other things. They could make a point out of that."

Council employee

Disability

From the disabled employees we spoke to the overall perception of working within MCC was positive. Almost all the staff we spoke to (across all characteristics) recognised how the Council was a diverse workforce, specifically mentioning the inclusion of disabled staff.

"That means different disabilities and different ethnicities, and just people being different and it's not a standard. There is a lot in the council. It's very diverse."

Council employee

"They appoint people that perhaps other organisations wouldn't. A colleague of mine has got very severe sight problems and hearing problems, and she's got a job and they've given her lots of equipment to help her do the job."

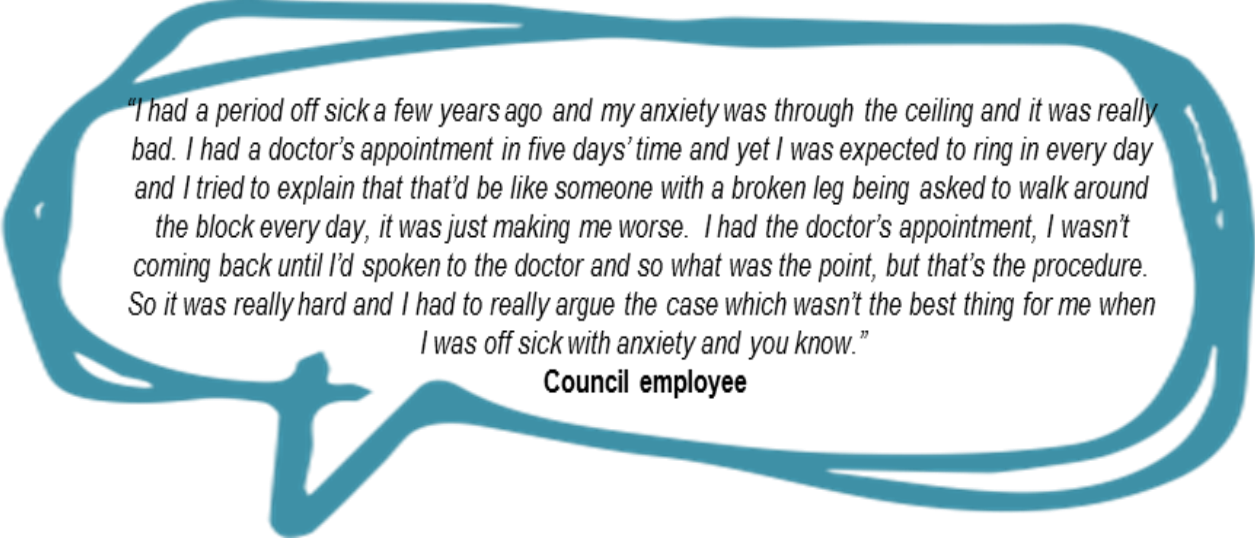
Council employee

Supporting the 'Time to Change' campaign was a strong example of the positive and effective things the Council has done to raise awareness of mental health. Employees hope this is not something that will eventually be pushed to the wayside, emphasising the importance in frequent promotion of 'Time to Change', be that on the intranet or through emails.



In terms of accessibility, overall disabled staff were happy with the efforts the Council was making to ensure staff could access everything they needed. There were small concerns with the recent closure of the Town Hall leading to an increase in people and equipment in other buildings, resulting in less space for those that needed it. Those that require extra room for access reasons felt that, for the time being at least, offices were a little harder to manoeuvre around. Most understood the reasoning for this however, ensuring 'space' being considered in the development of new buildings (both Town Hall and elsewhere) is important for disabled staff to feel included. Giving staff the opportunity to express their needs, along with the Council actively communicating their plans for development and explaining how access needs have been considered, are essential for good practice.

There was an essence of a 'failure to believe' culture with some managers. A number of employees felt they had been accused of manufacturing a disability-related condition with others feeling they frequently had to 'prove' or provide evidence of their condition. Although employees recognised that *some* may try and cheat the system, many felt the Councils lack of trust in its own staff was unfair and disheartening.

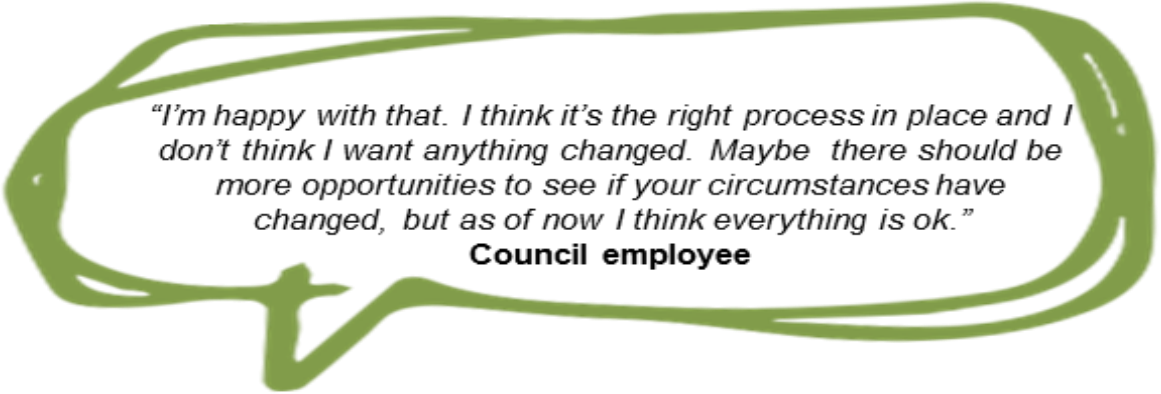


"I had a period off sick a few years ago and my anxiety was through the ceiling and it was really bad. I had a doctor's appointment in five days' time and yet I was expected to ring in every day and I tried to explain that that'd be like someone with a broken leg being asked to walk around the block every day, it was just making me worse. I had the doctor's appointment, I wasn't coming back until I'd spoken to the doctor and so what was the point, but that's the procedure. So it was really hard and I had to really argue the case which wasn't the best thing for me when I was off sick with anxiety and you know."

Council employee

Once this trust issue had been resolved most felt their managers, and the Council as a whole, were generally proactive and supportive. Few felt pressure to return to work if they needed to take leave and most felt their return process was a successful one.


Having good quality 'return to work' sessions with managers was something many disabled employees praised. Allowing the discussion of their needs, slower returner periods, and flexible working hours was important to staff in order to feel supported and included. Although the majority praised this exercise, a small proportion (mainly with less supportive managers) felt these sessions risked becoming 'tick boxy.' Ensuring managers understand the importance of these sessions, be that through training or allowing managers themselves to get support from HR or the Equalities Team, was something staff needed to see in order for this initiative to be successful for all.



"I'm happy with that. I think it's the right process in place and I don't think I want anything changed. Maybe there should be more opportunities to see if your circumstances have changed, but as of now I think everything is ok."

Council employee

Although many recognised the lengths the Council are going to in order to stress the importance of talking about health and wellbeing, many feel training was still needed. Staff understood managers could not possibly know 'everything about everything' when it comes to health and / or disability as the range of needs of individuals could be vast. Without basic or tailored training, or frequent refresher sessions, managers could become overwhelmed with understanding the level of support certain staff may need.

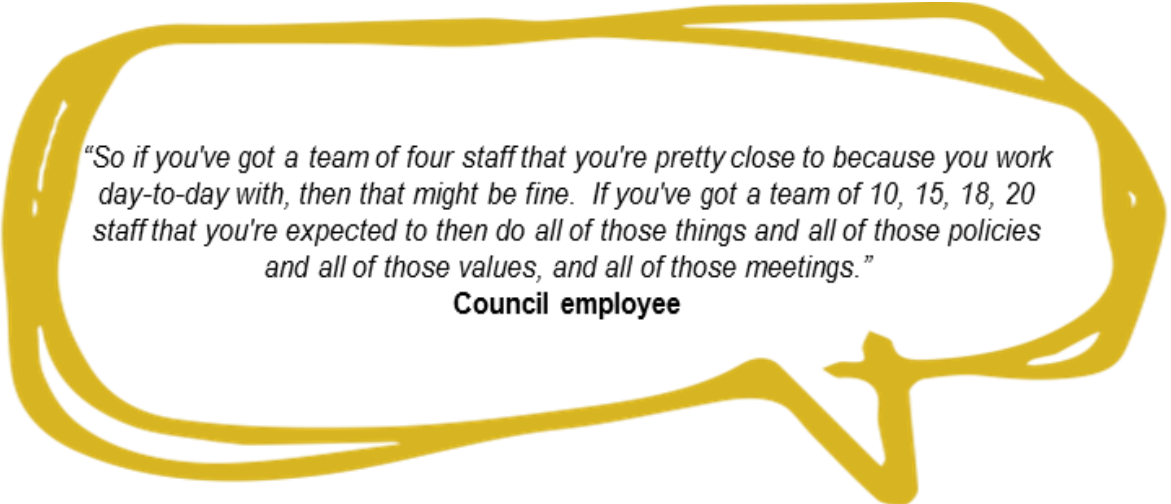


"We started getting all these broadcast emails talking about mental health and saying 'We're totally fine about this and it's time to talk', so when I first came out to my manager, it was still the council but my last manager, but he couldn't really handle it very well. So it was like I was getting this message that it was okay but actually he hadn't been equipped to deal with the reality of it."

Council employee

Managers themselves were concerned with how their own workloads were affecting team morale. Most managers who truly desired to give staff high levels of support however were overwhelmed by their own workloads and therefore frustrated by the limited time they could offer.

Others felt the Council needed to reassess the number of managers allocated to departments. There appears to be inconsistencies in the sizes of teams. Those managing smaller departments found it easier to balance their day to day targets with managing the health and wellbeing of their team. Those with larger departments recognised they were letting disabled members of their teams down by not being able to give staff dedicated support sessions.



"So if you've got a team of four staff that you're pretty close to because you work day-to-day with, then that might be fine. If you've got a team of 10, 15, 18, 20 staff that you're expected to then do all of those things and all of those policies and all of those values, and all of those meetings."

Council employee

Disabled participants also voiced frustrations with Occupational Health. Although many recognised this was a crucial initiative in getting people back to work, some had negative experiences of this process.

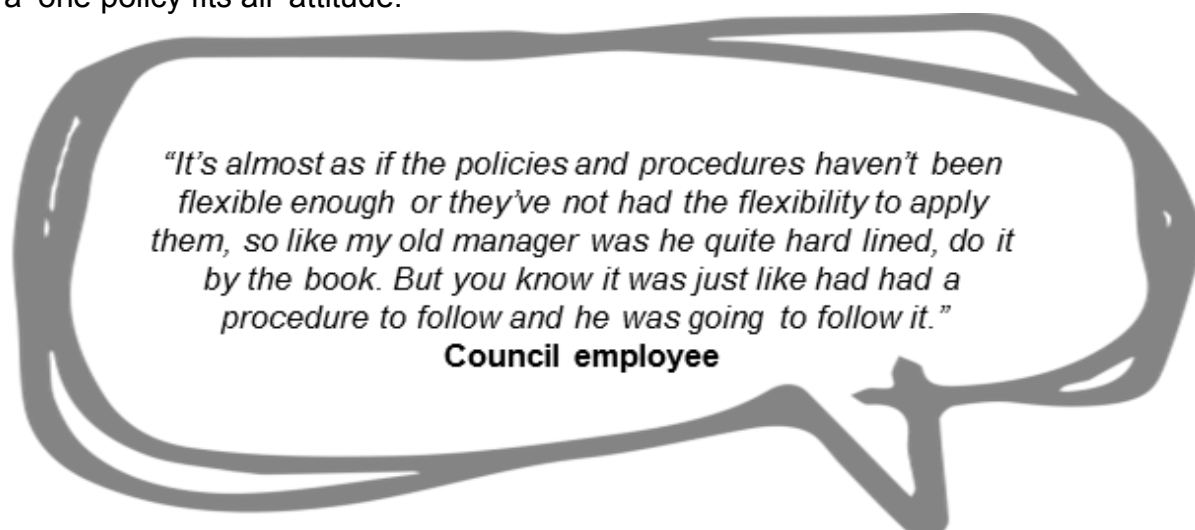
There was mention of feeling unduly pressured to attend meetings with an individual's access requirements not being considered on its own merit or in an empathetic way.

Furthermore, there is a sense that the processes for ensuring appropriate measures and adjustments are in place to enable disabled staff to work effectively is taking longer than necessary.

When it came to policies the majority of staff we spoke to praised the Council for a number of measures in place to ensure disability equality was included. There were however, concerns with how these had been created. Many questioned whether the council ever spoken to staff these policies affected whilst they were being created. Most stressed the need for this to be collaborative process in order to ensure good practice.

For this to happen, employees wanted to see more Listening in Action sessions specifically around disability. Many were aware that these sessions were taking place across the council but due to the lack of communications (or potentially due to relevant communications being lost or drowned out by other subjects) some disabled staff were not aware if, or how, they could have their say.

Further to this, many felt the policies currently in place were too rigid. There was concern that managers followed policies to the letter and, although this may be reasonable in other cases, when it comes to health and wellbeing there should not be a 'one policy fits all' attitude.



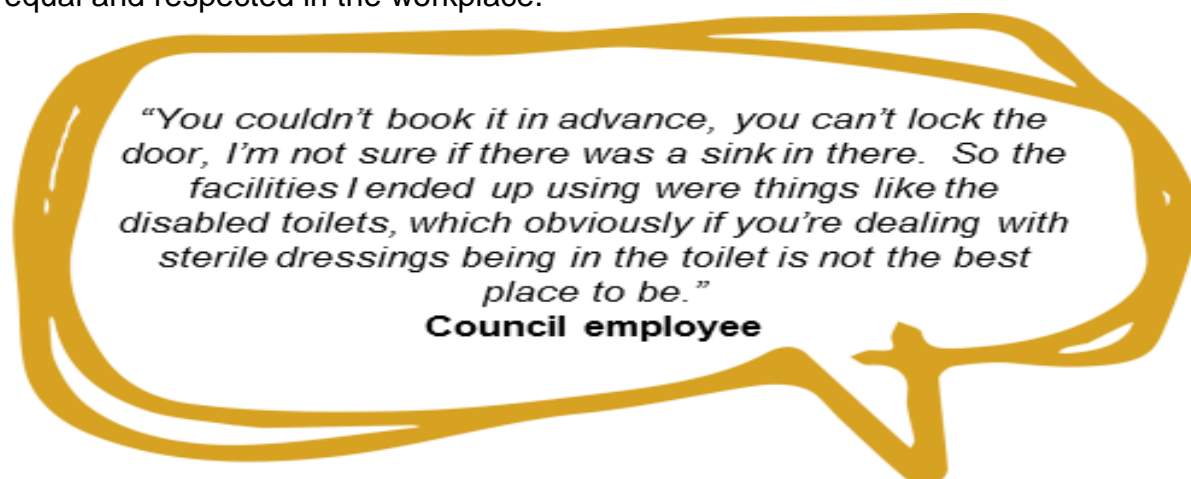
The lack of flexibility in policies and procedures concerning health and wellbeing make some policies feel contradictory of equality. The Council needs to understand that when it comes to health, each employee has individual and unique needs in order to make sure they are included and can work to their best ability. This emphasises the importance of one to one sessions with managers as it allows disabled staff to flag or address how policies are addressing / excluding their needs.

When asked how the Council can ensure flexibility is given and understanding of staff needs is improved, most disabled employees felt there is scope for more training. There is a sense that some managers would benefit from training that promotes understanding in the workplace at a wider level and assists in managers learning how to deal with various individual situations in both an empathetic and impartial manner.

When we asked disabled staff what their biggest day to day frustration was, the majority mentioned the lack of facilities available in order for them to protect their

privacy. Although most understood there were welfare rooms and recovery rooms available, most who needed these said they weren't fit for purpose.

Welfare rooms and accessible WCs are being used by those that don't necessarily need them (e.g. as changing rooms) and rooms not having locks were forcing staff to have to attend to their personal medical issues in unhygienic places such as bathrooms. This not only made staff feel overlooked but also making them feel like their dignity is being taken away from them. Allowing staff the sufficient space for them to attend to their own needs is crucial in helping some disabled staff to feel equal and respected in the workplace.




BAME

The majority of employees we spoke to (across all characteristics) spontaneously praised MCC for having a diverse workforce in terms of ethnicities. Many recognised the wide range of employees from different backgrounds, religions, and nationalities across the whole organisation.

There is a perception that the Council are performing well with regards to the number of BAME new starters and this is an area the Council is excelling.

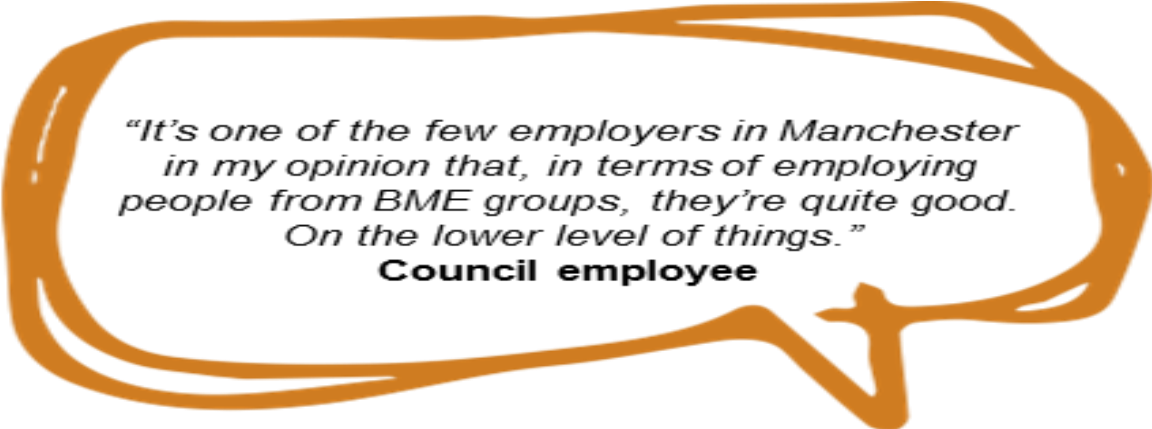
Further to this, the external recruitment process was praised as a whole. The anonymous application submission, which removed all identifiable information or characteristics, was seen as a progressive way of recruiting that sets an example of equal and diverse recruitment for the rest of the city. Many felt this was a successful way of removing prejudice or unconscious bias from the recruitment process, which in turn helped increase the feeling of inclusivity and diversity. Many felt this is something the Council could further promote.

For those new to the organisation, there was confidence in the Council for being a company they could successfully progress within. Positively, many described themselves as being at the start of a long career within MCC.



"That makes me feel really positive because it makes me realise that I'm probably at the start of my career here, and if I choose to stay there's a lot of potential for progress and working across a lot of different, interesting things."

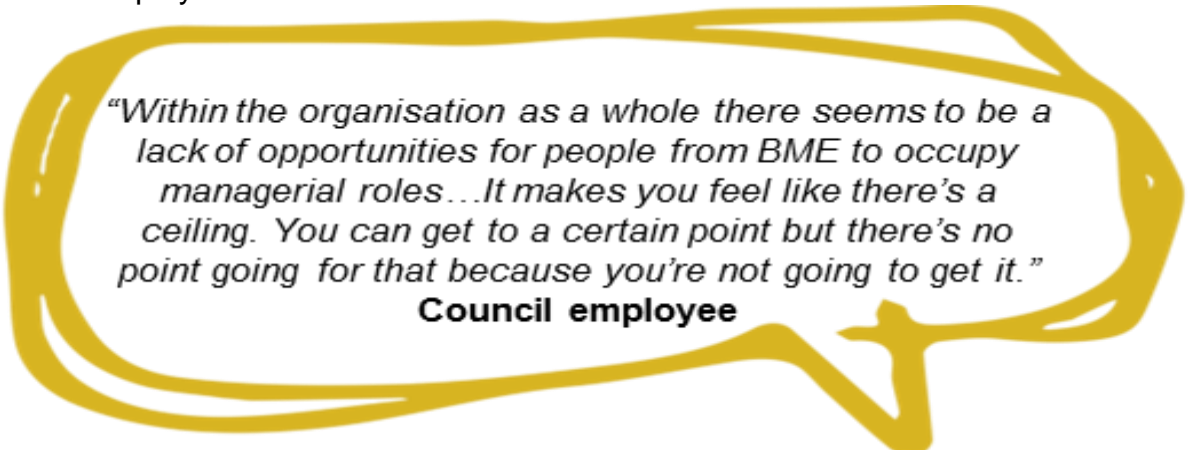
Council employee



"It's one of the few employers in Manchester in my opinion that, in terms of employing people from BME groups, they're quite good. On the lower level of things."

Council employee

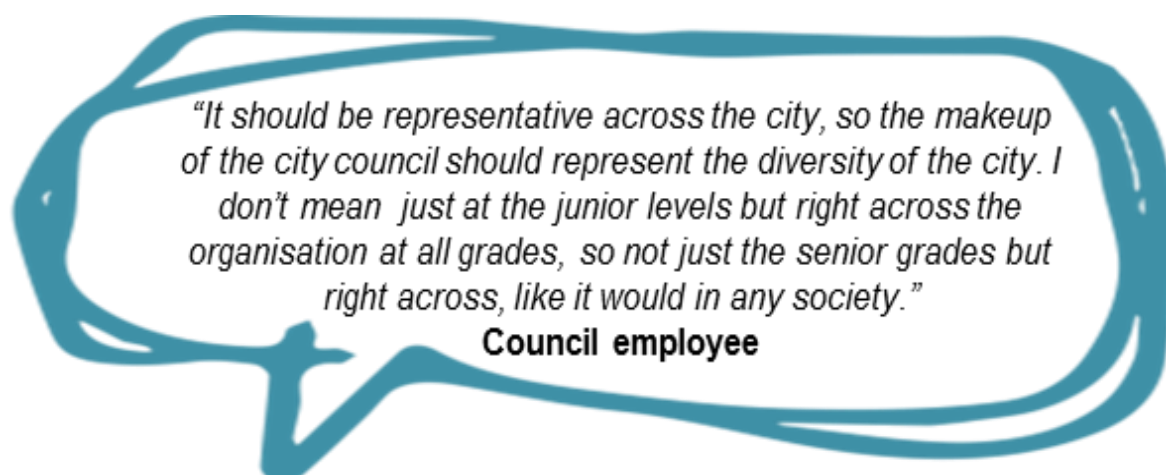
Unfortunately this encouraging perception of progression for BAME staff was not echoed by longer standing employees. Although the Council was praised for its diversity in general, it was widely recognised that there is a lack of representation of BAME employees in senior roles.



"Within the organisation as a whole there seems to be a lack of opportunities for people from BME to occupy managerial roles...It makes you feel like there's a ceiling. You can get to a certain point but there's no point going for that because you're not going to get it."

Council employee

The lack of representation of BAME staff in higher grades was not only recognised by BAME staff but by the majority of the employees we spoke to, emphasising the scale of the concern. Although many commented on how successful the Council was at reflecting the diversity within the city as a whole, some felt the lack of diversity in senior roles damaged this perception.



Almost all of the BAME staff we consulted with commented on the lack of developmental support within the Council, feeling that people with a BAME background were significantly less likely to be offered help or training in order to progress. If the help and direction is currently there, the message is not currently filtering down to all BAME employees.

Several of the BAME employees we consulted with have taken matters into their own hands in terms of training and further education. A small proportion were not confident the Council would provide them with the opportunities they needed and are therefore using their own money and time to better themselves by enrolling on courses outside of the Council. Some feared the only way they could progress in their career would be by leaving MCC altogether.

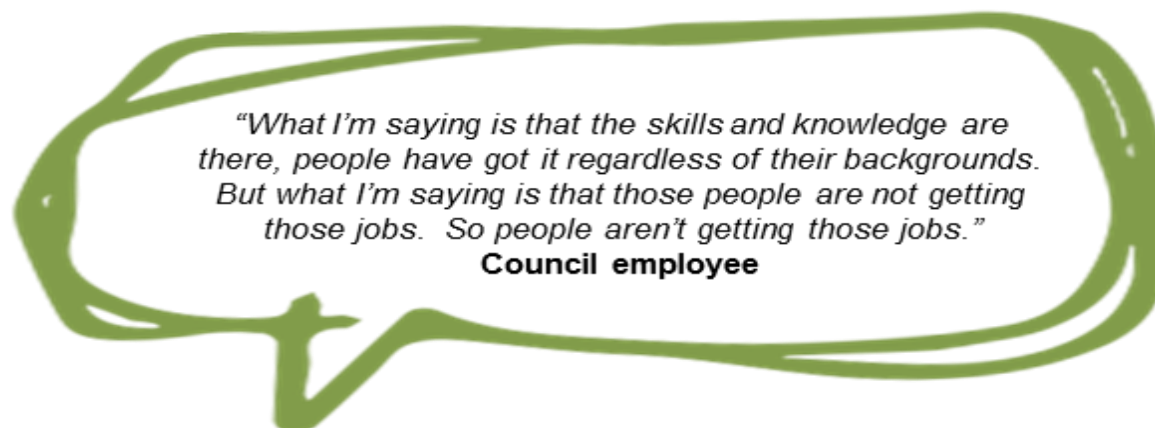


Others had the perception that most training opportunities were only being offered to people in higher roles and therefore was not something the majority of BAME staff could access. Altering the way training is currently offered was suggested as a way of including more BAME employees in these training opportunities.

Offering the same 'anonymous' application process as recruitment was one potential way of reducing unconscious bias when it came to training selection. Along with this, ensuring there is a reflective representation of staff in all training sessions and guaranteeing diversity is considered when accepting applicants is a step towards reassuring BAME staff they will have the opportunity to learn and progress.

Further to this, many noted the need for a proactive push from the Council to ensure more BAME staff were enrolling on training courses. A suggested way for the Council to achieve this was by targeting communications on training to BAME staff as soon as the training became available.

Some also comment on non-BAME staff being promoted ahead of them (or other BAME colleagues), despite feeling the successful applicant was not the right person for the job (e.g. limited experiences or fewer qualifications).



The negative perceptions with regards to internal recruitment panels discussed by other groups were echoed by BAME employees, citing this as another barrier in terms of BAME progression. Many stressed the importance in having diverse recruitment panels in order to make the process more equal, fair and inclusive. Although a minority suspect managers were intentionally preventing BAME staff from progressing, many felt that unconscious bias was unavoidable in unrepresentative panels.

The need (and desire) for diverse recruitment panels, in all cases, was perceived as a necessary step for many in order for BAME members' to progress within the Council. Having panel members that represent as many communities as possible would prevent people from subconsciously hiring people that mirror their own ethnicity or background and would force honest discussion as to why people had been awarded roles. Along with a diverse panel, having panel members from other departments that are more likely to be impartial would further prevent people being hired for 'who they are' rather than 'what they know.'

Many praised how the Council gave everyone the opportunity to request feedback on their interviews, however, there was a feeling that the reasoning they received felt unfair and there were undertones of it being related to their BAME background.



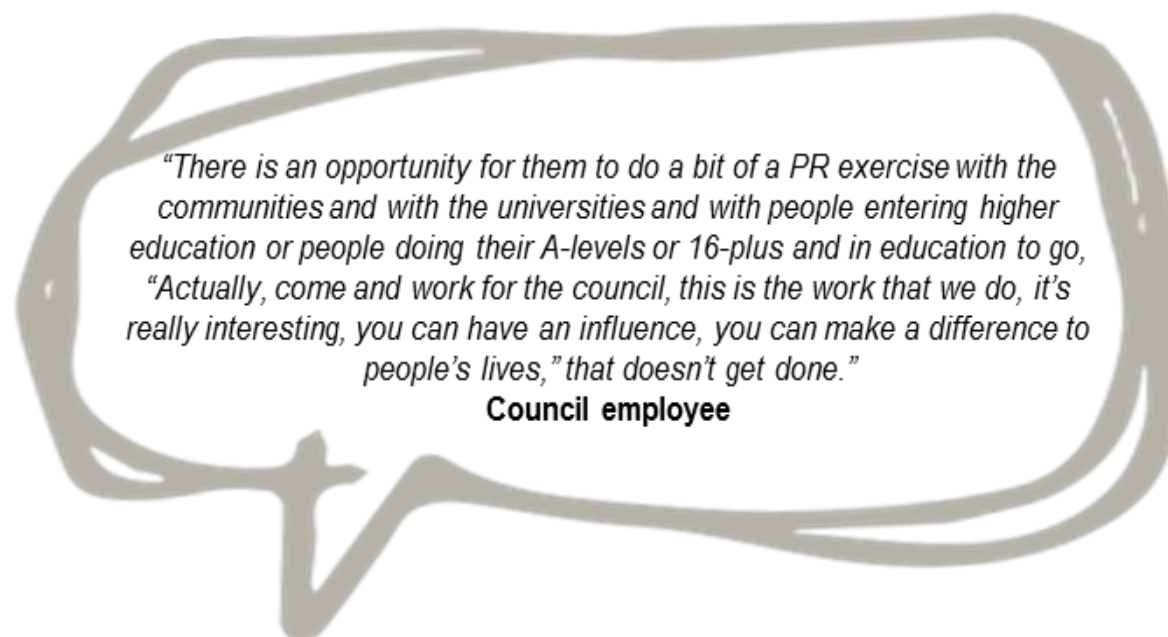
When asked how the Council could aid in providing BAME staff further opportunities to progress, mentoring schemes were frequently cited. There is currently confusion as to whether or not these schemes are available, and if so, who they are available for -suggesting the need for further communications on this.

Development of a mentoring scheme was suggested, whereby more senior employees would mentor individuals of lower grades. This would provide BAME staff with more exposure to these roles as well as give them introductions to the people recruiting for these roles. Many felt having a BAME visibility amongst the senior staff would further prevent unconscious bias when it came to hiring senior staff.

Although many felt there was a long way to go in terms of seeing BAME officers in senior roles, some recognised the positive impact Joanne Roney is having on BAME progression. Employees praised how she has vocally addressed the lack of diversity and BAME women in higher levels. Many were confident that she will make sure this issue is addressed, which stresses the importance in the Council making an active change. Failure to address these issues after the CEO has publicly acknowledged the issue would further impact on the 'broken promise.'



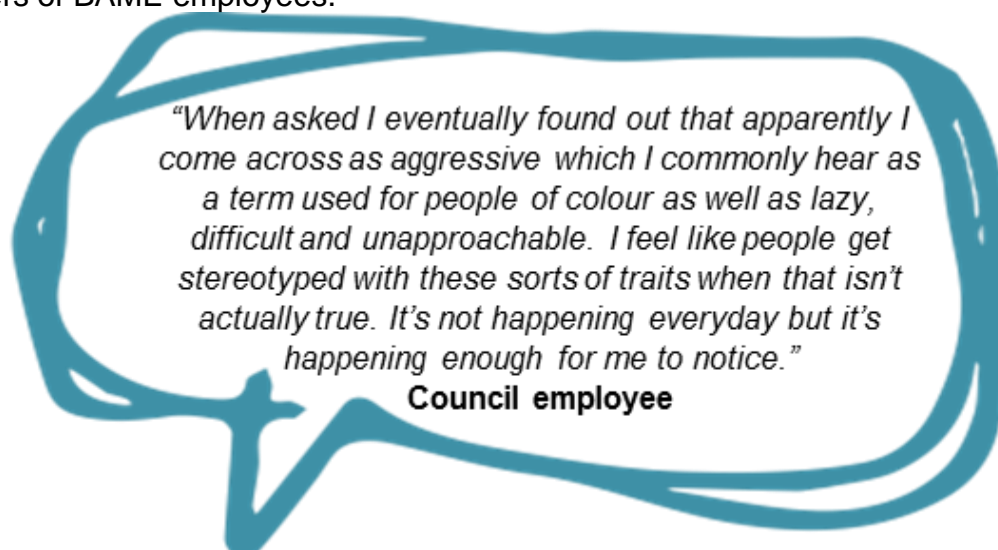
Further suggestions for improvement related to how the Council positions itself to the outside community. Many suggested the need for the Council to further promote itself to outside communities, clearly communicating how accepting MCC is to diversity. Some felt the Council being actively present in schools, colleges and universities throughout Manchester is an opportunity to target youths in BAME communities. Approaching these groups and promoting MCC as an organisation which celebrates diversity to audiences who are about to choose their career path could help boost BAME staff numbers. Further to this, promoting the Council as a place where the BAME community can be successful, progress, and make a difference to the wider community would help in reducing the negative perception some BAME communities have about working for the Council.



For most BAME staff experiences of direct racism were few and far between, with many saying that their day to day work life was generally unaffected. However, some did mention occasions where comments, language and stereotypes had been attributed to themselves or other BAME colleagues.

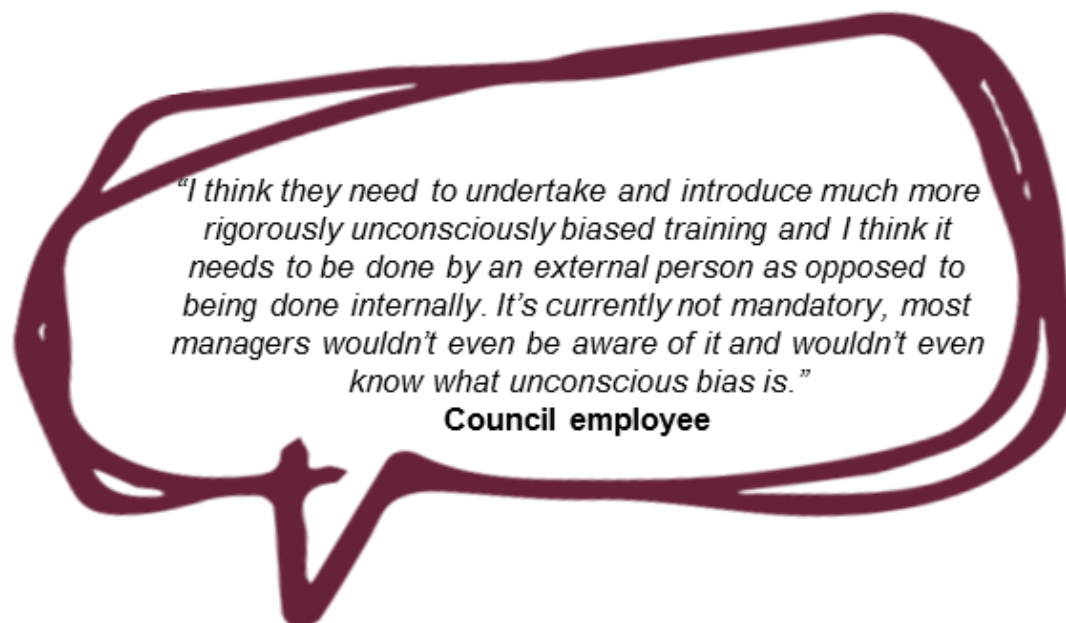
When prompted it was noted that the words 'lazy,' 'confrontational,' 'difficult,' and 'unapproachable' were used to describe their own or others character and working styles. A number of employees said these were words used to 'justify' not promoting BAME staff.

Although staff accepted that not every BAME employee was 'gold standard', as there are workers from all communities that fail to meet exceptional working standards, some staff were commonly, and unjustly, hearing this language used for large numbers of BAME employees.



Specific and mandatory training sessions aimed at tackling unconscious bias was commonly suggested as something that should be implemented by the Council in order to challenge and change the language used against, and the treatment of


BAME staff. Although many recognised that this could be a costly and timely exercise for the Council to implement, many felt it was a necessary step to set a precedent in how people should be treated - bringing to light the subtle behaviours people have in terms of interacting with BAME staff and demonstrating that treating BAME staff equally and fairly is something at the top of the Council's agenda.



A small number of the BAME employees we spoke to had said they had experienced direct racism within MCC. Those people were disappointed in how the Council tackled and resolved these issues. In some cases staff felt isolated in their department and that their colleagues were aware but turning a blind eye, and this in turn had a negative impact on decisions to speak up and address issues with their own managers. This strengthens the need for impartial support systems being in place.

Most BAME employees that we spoke to mentioned the importance of seeing BAME staff in senior roles, noting the positive impact it could have on BAME staff in general. Having clear visual representations of BAME communities in higher grades was seen as a necessity in order to encourage BAME employees to put themselves forward for progression, making it an achievable goal. Many commented that, due to the lack of BAME senior staff, there was a lack of BAME role models for staff to follow.

Few staff spontaneously mentioned the BAME Staff Group, but from those that did there were many reasons as to why people felt the group had lost momentum. Firstly, many felt being associated with the group was detrimental to both their career and character. Several employees mentioned hesitation in being involved in these groups for fear of being labelled a 'troublemaker' for being associated with a group that actually promotes progressive and positive change. Others felt this label would follow them when they were looking to develop and change roles within the Council.



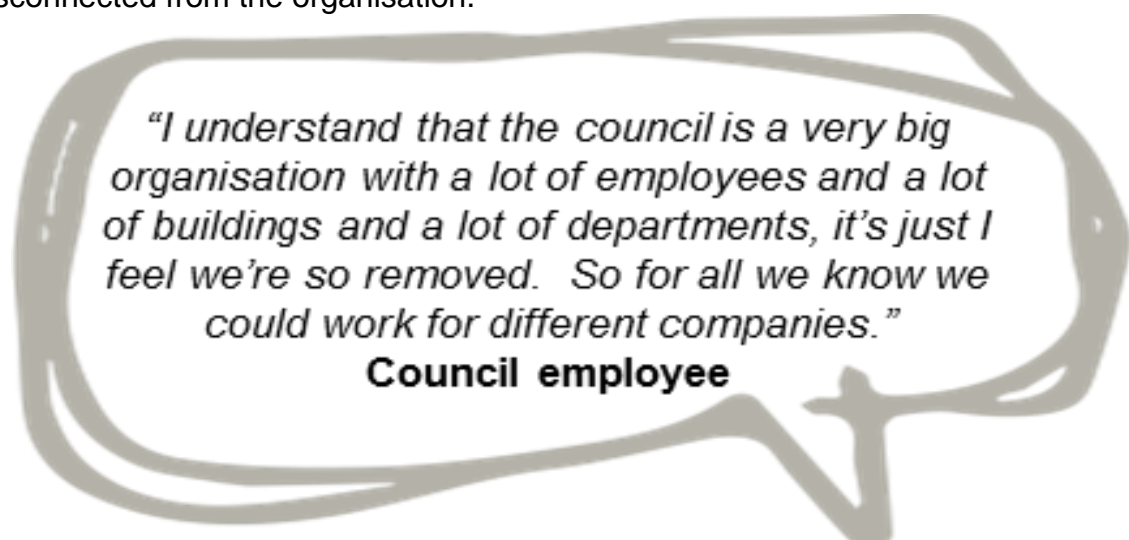
"I think with the race staff group in particular there was a strong perception that if you're affiliated to this group it's going to affect your career chances. Because you're seen as being difficult because you're challenging the organisation. That was more specifically for the black staff group."

Council employee

From those with limited awareness, there were inconsistencies in understanding the purpose of these groups and there appeared to be a lack of awareness in the reasons for attending. Like with other staff groups, there was potential for further promotion. A lack of understanding on the aim and purpose of these groups, the events that take place within them and the changes that can be made by attending need addressing through further communications and promotions.

Location

Historically many outside of the Town Hall Extension felt disjointed from not only the central office, but from the Council as a whole. Most felt that there was a lack of engagement or involvement from the Council which resulted in them feeling disconnected from the organisation.



"I understand that the council is a very big organisation with a lot of employees and a lot of buildings and a lot of departments, it's just I feel we're so removed. So for all we know we could work for different companies."

Council employee

Some examples as to why some felt unequal to the staff within the Town Hall Extension include:

- Only receiving email and intranet access within the last few years / months
- Less opportunities for training / development and progression
- Inconsistencies in working flexibilities e.g. flexi time, office opening hours, how well policies are adhered to
- Roll outs of new procedures, systems and policies are filtered down rather than across the board at the same time
- Limited or slow communications

- Lack of investment and development in buildings



Alexandra House was described as "The Town Hall's poorer cousin." Many felt there was a lack of power as well as a lack of voice for those working within this building. For those in other offices, some felt like they were an afterthought.

Many commented on the lack of opportunities they have compared to the Town Hall Extension, be that training courses, development opportunities or chances to progress in their career. Some feel that by working outside of the City Centre they are being held back as the Council does not provide them with the exposure they need.

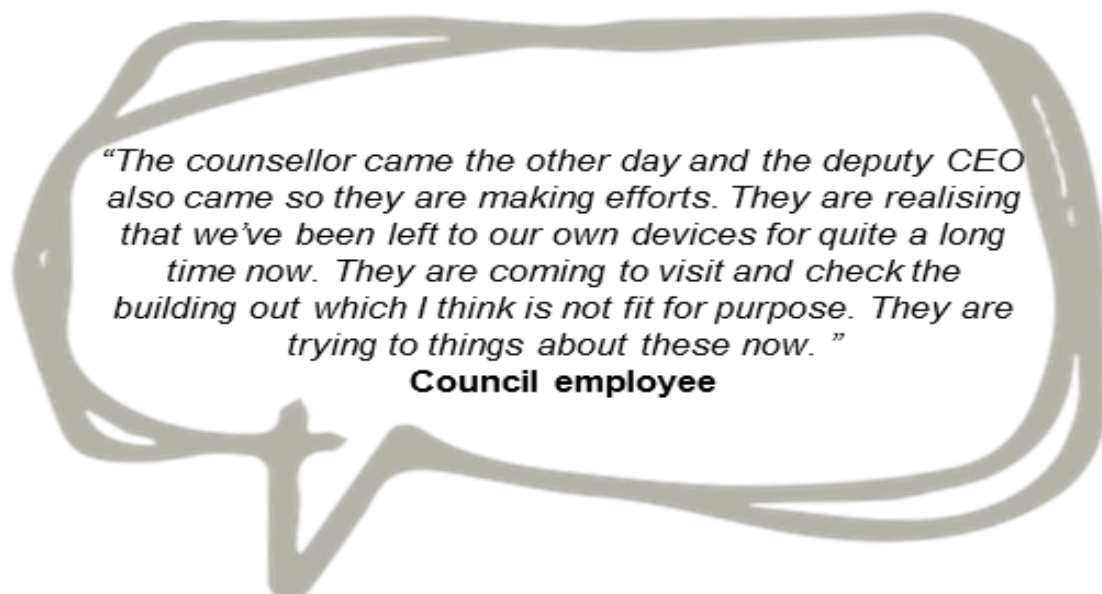


However, most employees outside the Town Hall Extension recognised the Council's efforts in making all departments feel included and equal. They can see that

improvements are being made, however there are still frustrations at how long these changes are taking. When asked how the Council can improve on making other locations feel equal, the response was mostly 'more of what you are already doing.'

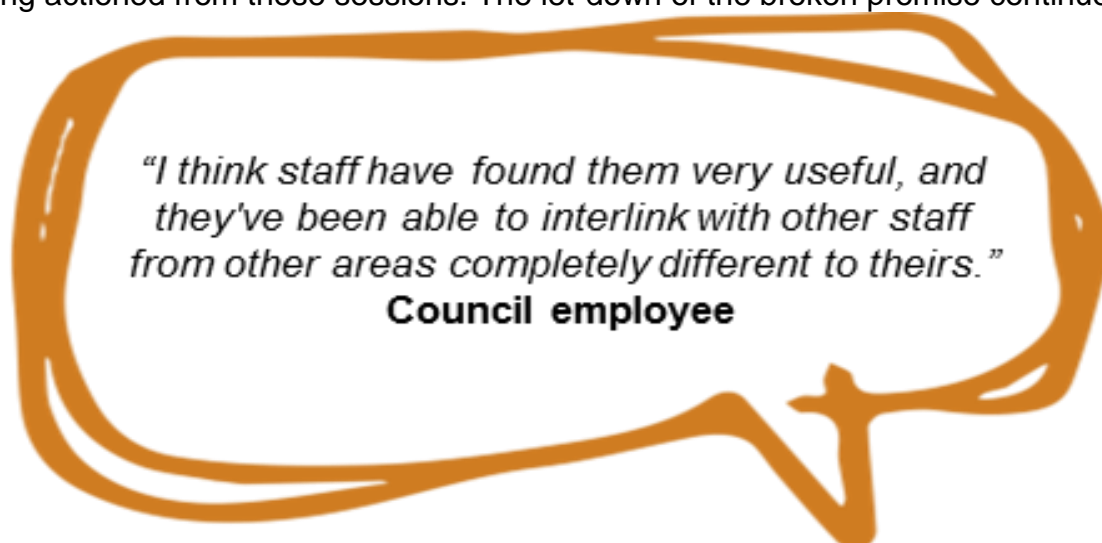


Joanne Roney is also helping bridge the gap in making those outside the Town Hall feel equal, as well as bringing all locations together. Her human presence within many of the offices is not going unnoticed and is helping to make staff feel like they are part of the overall organisation. Knowing the CEO has recognised some of the frustrations employees within these offices have helped them feel included, valued and like she is working towards bringing the organisation together as a whole. More appearances from her and more acknowledgements to locations outside of the Town Hall in her communications could help remind everyone that they are part of 'the Council community.'



Holding listening and action sessions in locations outside the centre are allowing more employees to feel like they have the opportunity to be heard and to feel like they are part of 'the community.' For some, these sessions are the only times they are made aware of changes being made within the Council. There are still ways however, in which these sessions could improve. Having more of these sessions in more locations will continue to make those in offices outside the Town Hall Extension

feel like they are able to have a say and that the Council wants to understand their needs. Some do feel that, although having the opportunity to be heard is great for locations outside the city centre, frustrations are echoed in regards to no outcomes being actioned from these sessions. The let-down of the broken promise continues.



The Be Heard survey is helping to make those outside the city centre feel included. It's giving everyone in the organisation a voice, rather than just the few. Again, there are concerns that the loop is not being closed in terms of the concerns addressed actually being answered.

Another way in which some staff working outside of the Town Hall claimed they could be made to feel more included in the Council workforce was by having shadowing sessions. Some staff felt that there was a shadowing scheme already in place; however there could be confusion with mentoring schemes discussed earlier. This potential confusion again highlights the need for clear communications about mentoring or shadowing opportunities.

As many felt those in the Town Hall had more working flexibilities there are potential positives in allowing staff to shadow or be mentored by those in the Town Hall. Allowing staff to experience the working styles implemented within the Town Hall would allow them to introduce these methods into other locations, helping to enforce fair working conditions across all departments and locations.

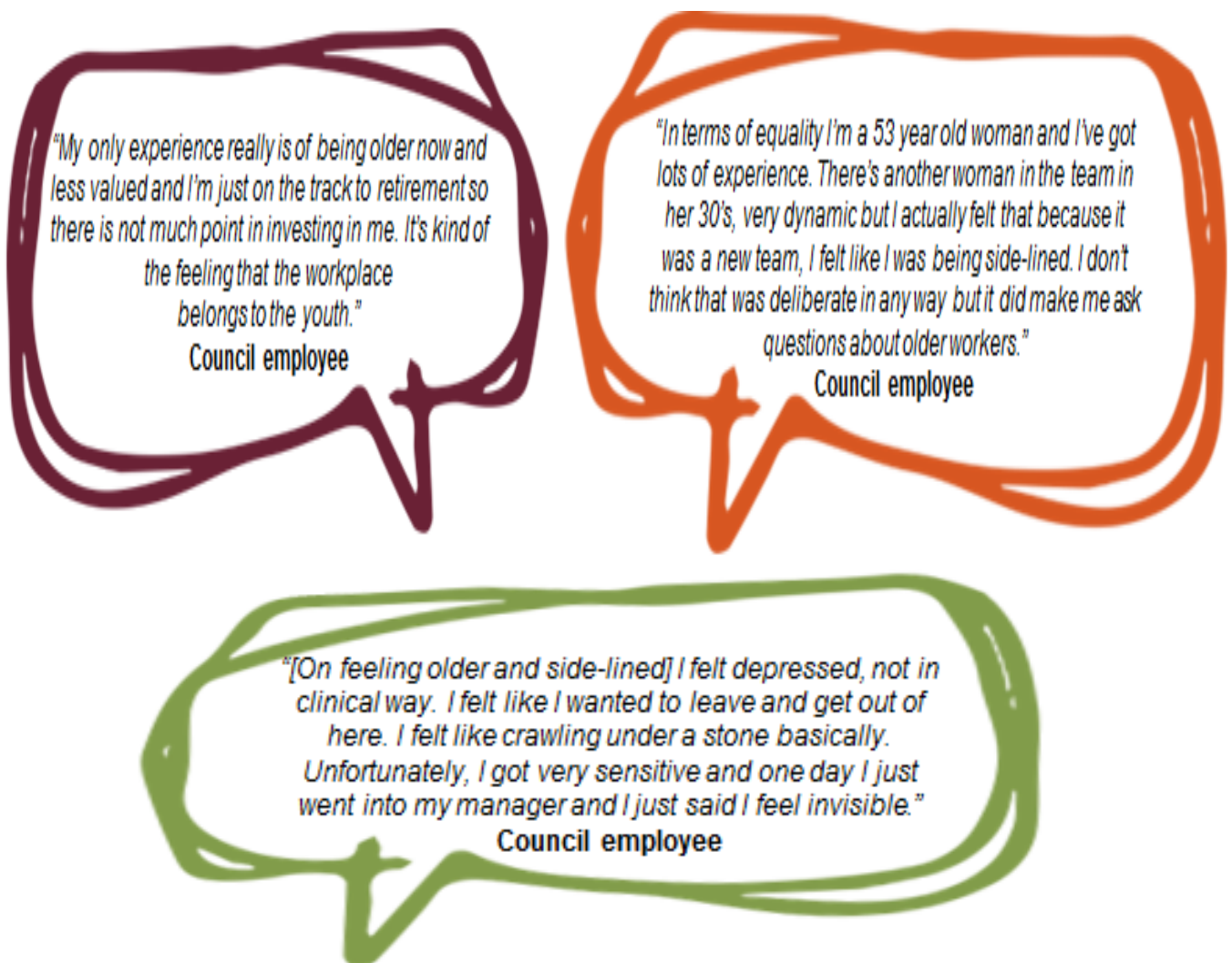
The introduction of short HR sessions within other locations is appreciated. Giving people the opportunity to sit down with HR face-to-face, outside of the Town Hall is welcomed. Having said this, many believe it is another example of something that could be improved greatly with only minor adjustments. Given that staff at the Town Hall are able to visit the HR team at any point during their working week; those outside of the Town Hall claimed they should be able to engage with the HR team more frequently, and for longer periods of time. Many also expressed that a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the context behind these HR sessions would be invaluable to them. Staff were unsure as to the purpose of these sessions, what they could say, what they couldn't say and what might happen after speaking to the HR team. This lack of knowledge was seen as an initial deterrent to using the service, which was agreed, could be a critical step towards equality and diversity throughout the workforce if implemented fairly.

Age

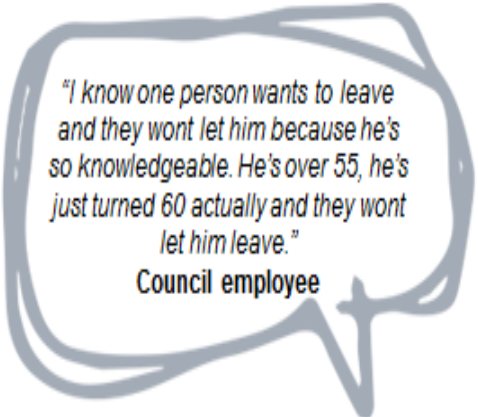
For the most part ageism was not an area that came up naturally in discussion amongst the vast majority of the employees we spoke with. From this we could infer that this is an element of diversity and equality which is less visible relative to other facets. This is not to say however, that it is of less importance.

Amongst the older employees we spoke with there were a few recurring themes - these related to a lack of opportunity, feeling unsupported as they approach retirement or feeling pressured into continuing working rather than retiring.

Amongst those approaching the retirement age band there was a feeling that they were less investable than their younger counterparts and there was evidence of situations where age had appeared to be a barrier to progressing / developing further.

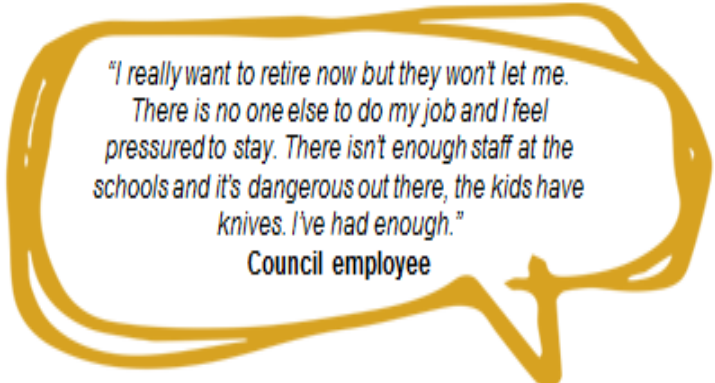


There was also an indication that some older employees approaching retirement felt the Council did not want them to retire and were actively discouraging this. One employee claimed another colleague had a desire to retire but as they held all of the knowledge on their role the Council were not allowing this. Another employee stated they felt pressured to stay in their role as there was nobody else who would be suitable to take over their role.



"I know one person wants to leave and they won't let him because he's so knowledgeable. He's over 55, he's just turned 60 actually and they won't let him leave."


Council employee



"I really want to retire now but they won't let me. There is no one else to do my job and I feel pressured to stay. There isn't enough staff at the schools and it's dangerous out there, the kids have knives. I've had enough."


Council employee

Although some older employees feel that they have been discriminated against, there is a sense that when ageism is experienced within the workplace it tends to be more subtle when compared to other areas of inequality.



"I mean I think my age has counted against me in terms of recent opportunities. I've been asked 'Well how old are you' and then other things have then followed through which made me think 'Oh, the judgement has been made because I've told them and I'm within that bracket of retirement' and I think that was unfair."

Council employee



"[On development opportunities] Well nobody helps develop anybody. You just get on and do your job. I don't expect to retire at 66, but I don't know I wish I could make them see that. I told my manager when she said 'You'd have to go to university and get a degree'. So I said 'Well I know I'm not far off of possible retirement age but I don't think I should be retiring any time soon.' I think they just want a fresh face."

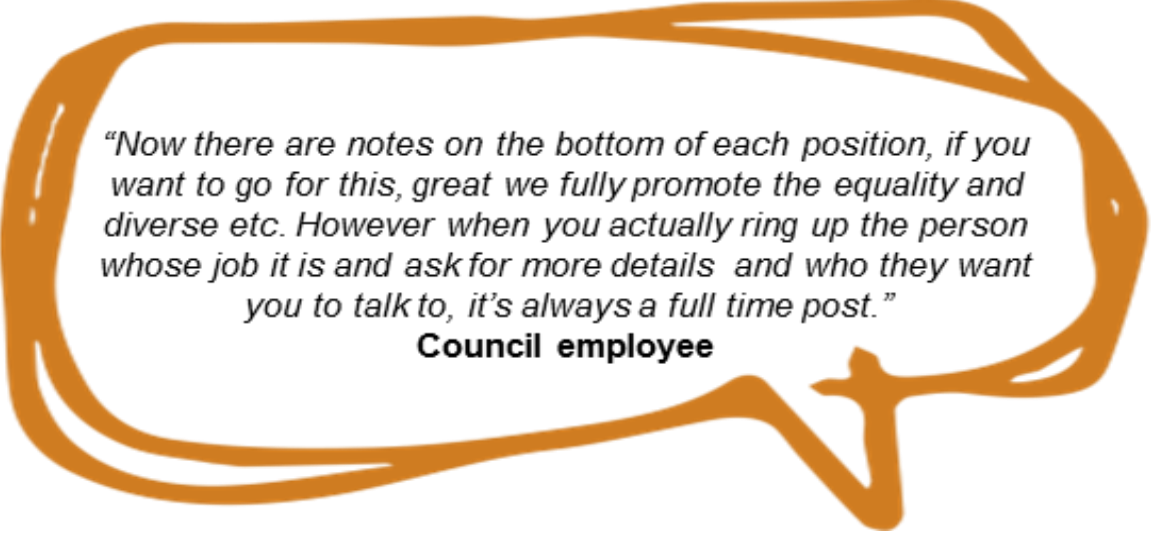
Council employee

Part-Time Staff

Another potential area of equality and diversity that was less visible is that of those in part-time positions. Like with ageism, this topic was only apparent for a small number of the employees we spoke to, although this could be reflective of the proportion of part-time workers within MCC.

Providing employees with part-time opportunities was recognised as a strong point for the Council as it allows and promotes staff to fit work around other areas of their lives. However, the limited opportunities and lack of support expressed by older employees was echoed by part-time workers. There were concerns regarding limited prospects to move into new roles or develop within the Council. There were frustrations concerning how most new opportunities within the organisation were advertised as full time roles, with further frustrations regarding the acknowledgement


of promoting equality and diversity within the adverts, but when challenged the option of going part-time was dismissed.



"Now there are notes on the bottom of each position, if you want to go for this, great we fully promote the equality and diverse etc. However when you actually ring up the person whose job it is and ask for more details and who they want you to talk to, it's always a full time post."

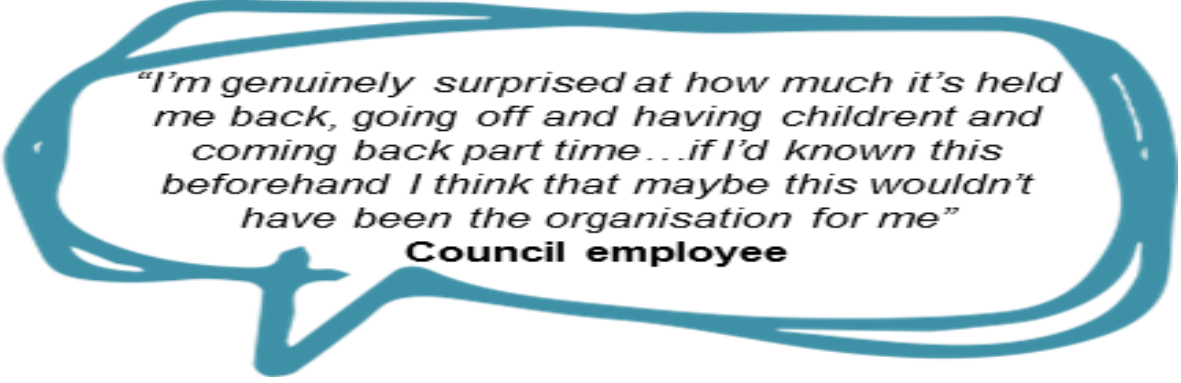
Council employee

Some felt making the decision to go part-time had been detrimental to their career, feeling like they were being deskilled by being 'stuck' in a role. There was a perception that the lack of opportunity for part-time staff was restricting them and, in some cases, there was resistance from managers to help with progression. Part-time workers echoed the concern that some managers were actively discouraging staff from progressing, applying for other roles or moving to different departments within the Council. This lack of supporting growth led to feelings of disappointment in not only management but the Council as a whole.



"I feel at times I'm being deskilled because I'm not able to move into another position which I know I could definitely do. I'm not sure the organisation is prepared to put support in place for people who are part time. That has been a real struggle for me. ."

Council employee




"I'm genuinely surprised at how much it's held me back, going off and having children and coming back part time...if I'd known this beforehand I think that maybe this wouldn't have been the organisation for me"

Council employee

The lack of consistency between management and departmental treatment was also echoed by part-time staff, with them recognising that other departments have more flexibility when it comes to part-time workers. Ensuring that all departments treat their part-time staff in an equal fashion, ensuring that there is consistency in how these staff are managed, is critical to good practice and making these employees feel equal.

When asked how the Council could improve the working environment for part-time staff and help make them feel more equal and included, there was enthusiasm for the Council improving job sharing opportunities. There was the perception that this is currently only offered to long standing staff, rather than being an opportunity for all. Introducing job shares across the board and allowing multiple staff to share one full time role would help part-time staff feel valued, heard, re-motivated, and would allow them to progress.



"The job share is definitely not embraced in our department and I know in other departments job share is very common. I've asked about job shares since literally coming back [from maternity] and I've been back part time five years. So it's been a long time."

Council employee

Further characteristics

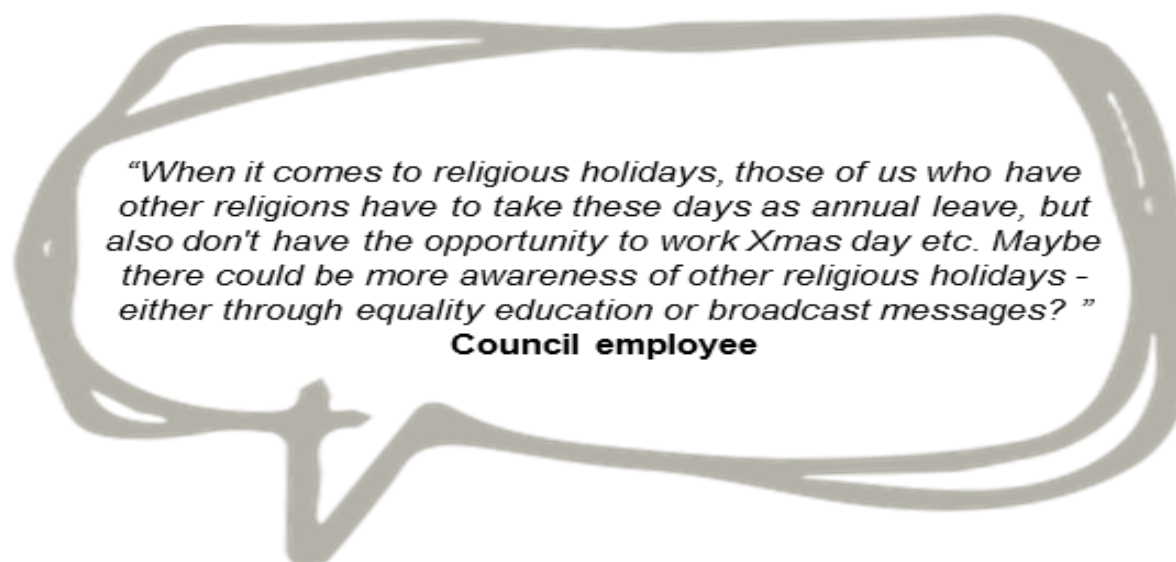
Along with the above characteristics discussed, gender and religion were anecdotally mentioned by a small number of employees.

There was reference to MCC having a good representation of genders across the Council, with some having the perception there are more females than males. Considering recent media attention and online movements regarding gender pay gaps there were concerns that the Council may be missing the mark when it came to equal pay for male and female counterparts, however, this was based on opinion rather than fact.

There were further comments about maternity and paternity leave. There was uncertainty from some as to whether shared maternity leave was an initiative the Council allowed its staff to benefit from. Allowing shared leave was something some felt would help show the Council was an equal and inclusive workplace.

Religion was also something addressed by a small number of employees, with most noting how the council was accepting of all religions.

There were, however, frustrations with leave over religious holidays with some noting that annual leave was needed for certain religious holidays but not others (e.g. Christmas). Creating more awareness of religious holidays and allowing flexibility in religious leave is something MCC could focus on. Allowing staff to work over Christmas if this wasn't a holiday they celebrated, and ensuring no one has to use annual leave to celebrate their own religious holidays is one way of making sure all staff felt included.



Recommendations and achievable next steps

There are some achievable steps that MCC could implement in the short term:

Closing the loop

Ensuring there is more communications between the Equalities Team and staff, particularly those engaging with equality and diversity will help staff feel heard. Staff need to know they have been listened too and it is important for the Council to converse further by acknowledging engagement and letting staff know what changes have been, or will be, made.

Promote training to BAME staff

Due to strong recognition in the lack of BAME staff in senior roles there is a need for the Council to ensure more BAME staff receive the support and training necessary for progressing within the organisation. Targeted communications and ensuring training is diverse and inclusive are potential first steps to helping BAME staff into senior roles.

Re-evaluate internal recruitment processes

As staff praised the external recruitment process it is important MCC re-evaluates the internal process in order to improve staff perceptions of equality in the workplace. Ensuring panels are diverse and interdepartmental is one way to reducing unconscious bias during the recruitment process.

Communication

There is no such things as too much communication when it comes to equality and diversity in the workplace. Allowing those who are truly engaged in equalities to 'subscribe' to the equalities team; be that via email or an online community board, will ensure people can easily access the communications they want to hear. MCC also needs to continue to strengthen communication and engagement to offices outside the Town Hall Extension.