

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Personnel Committee – 13 September 2023

Subject: Revised HROD policy – Draft Recruitment and Selection Policy

Report of: Director of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Transformation

Summary

To outline a revised employment policy for the Committee's consideration: the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to approve the revised policy attached to this report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

There will be no significant environmental impacts
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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<p>The policy is reviewed in a context where the Council understands that we have some way to go before we achieve our ambition, as set out in the Workforce Equality Strategy (2022), to have a workforce that reflects our diverse city by 2025.</p>
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<p>The policy will continue to reinforce the Council's legal obligations set out in the Equality Act 2010 to consider reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process in order to remove barriers experienced by disabled candidates and those with a long-term health condition.</p>

<p>It will aim to go beyond this by asking managers and all candidates to discuss measures of support that may enable individuals to thrive and be their best self on the day of any recruitment assessment. This additional flexibility should remove barriers experienced by marginalised groups other than those with a disability or long-term health condition.</p>
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<p>It will also strengthen the message about diverse panels by saying that recruiting managers have a responsibility to ensure panels they assemble are diverse by race and gender.</p>

Workforce data shows that staff who identify as being black or as belonging to another ethnic minority are underrepresented at almost every pay grade in the Council. Underrepresentation is particularly stark at higher levels, and the higher the grade, the worse the underrepresentation. At grades SS1 and above, only 7% identify as being black or belonging to another ethnic minority, whereas the 2021 census data shows that about 43% of Manchester's population identifies as being black or belonging to another ethnic minority.

Taken together, we believe that the measures set out in the new policy will support all Manchester residents find opportunities to find work and progress in their careers with the Council. We believe that the measures should level the playing field and open up opportunities for members of underrepresented and marginalised groups such as disabled residents and residents who are Black or of another ethnic minority.

Impacts on all protected characteristics

Increased flexibility in designing recruitment activity is intended to remove barriers experienced by those sharing any protected characteristic

The new policy reasserts the Council's commitment to the Equality Act and therefore we continue to act to eliminate unlawful discrimination against any protected characteristic. It also asserts the Council's zero-tolerance approach to any discrimination.

Finally, by opening up the concept of reasonable adjustments and saying we will consider supportive measures for any staff member to enable them to perform at their best, staff who share any protected characteristic will have an opportunity to ask for greater support in the recruitment process.

Other specific impacts

Disability

A relaunched policy with comms and engagement after launch will reinforce and strengthen existing messages about our duty to consider reasonable adjustments, and also the positive action measures for candidates with a disability or long term health condition, such as the commitment to guarantee shortlisting to any candidate who is disabled and meets the key criteria for any role.

The new policy will communicate our Disability Confident Leader status, we take positive action to support disabled candidates to have equal opportunities in recruitment, and we expect managers to remove barriers for disabled candidates.

Race

The policy asserts our 2022 commitment to diverse recruitment panels and also publicises the new Diverse Panels app which supports managers to achieve a diverse

recruitment panel and reduce the effect of unconscious bias. The policy states that all recruitment panels must be diverse by race and gender.

Sex

The policy asserts our 2022 commitment to diverse recruitment panels and also publicises the new Diverse Panels app which supports managers to achieve a diverse recruitment panel and reduce the effect of unconscious bias. The policy states that all recruitment panels must be diverse by race and gender.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The policy states that for most vacancies, roles will be advertised internally and externally at the same time, which should help drive a more diverse workforce by putting external candidates on an equal footing with internal candidates.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	<p>The policy retains the commitment to ring fence certain opportunities for Manchester residents.</p> <p>The policy also retains the positive action measures used to support priority groups: former looked after children and care leavers, disabled people, and current and former members of the Armed Forces</p>
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	<p>Asking managers to consider how they advertise and take steps to reach out to our diverse communities.</p> <p>Considering more than just reasonable adjustments, but other measures which could enable a diverse range of candidates to thrive in a recruitment and selection scenario.</p> <p>Retains the positive action to guarantee interview to priority groups: disabled candidates; former looked after children and care leavers; and current and former members of the armed forces through our Armed Forces Covenant.</p> <p>We believe these measures will support marginalised and underrepresented groups of residents take up employment opportunities</p>

	with the Council and progress their Council careers.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Not applicable
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Not applicable

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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.

Appendix A	Revised Draft Recruitment and Selection Policy
Appendix B	Current Recruitment and Selection Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The revised Recruitment and Selection Policy has been developed to incorporate critical strategic aims arising from the Race Review (2019) and the Workforce Equality Strategy (2022). The policy was last approved by Personnel Committee in June 2018 so, on the basis that policies are normally reviewed every three years, it was also overdue for a review.

2.0 Context for the review

- 2.1 The context of recruitment at Manchester City Council from 2010 to 2018 was greatly influenced by central government's austerity programme and associated budgetary reductions. In turn, this led to a focus on the development of our own staff via the mpeople principles, as opposed to external recruitment.
- 2.2 The 2018 review recognised the need and budgetary scope for increased external recruitment. This current review carries forward this momentum, combining it with internal and external imperatives that have arisen since 2018.
- 2.3 The independent Race Report, completed in November 2019, recommended reviewing HR policies through the lens of race equality. As a key HR policy, the Recruitment and Selection policy is apt for review on this basis.
- 2.4 The central ambition of the Workforce Equality Strategy (WES), published in 2022, was that Manchester City Council's workforce should reflect the rich diversity of talent in the community we serve by 2025. The WES contained six strands, and the first of these was to attract, recruit and select in a way that is inclusive and drives diversity at all levels. Ensuring the Recruitment and Selection Policy is geared towards this aim is key to achieving the goals set out in the WES.
- 2.5 The aim of diversifying the workforce to better reflect our city's community requires internal and external candidates to be recruited on a more equal footing. This is to facilitate a wider and more diverse pool of candidates from which to select the best candidates for our roles. Therefore, one key change set out in the revised policy is that, normally and by default, roles will be advertised externally and internally at the same time.
- 2.6 For residents, we believe that this will mean more opportunities to join the Council workforce and progress their careers, and should level the playing field for those residents in marginalised and underrepresented groups. We also firmly believe that having a diverse workforce with a range of perspectives will improve the level of service provision for our residents.
- 2.7 The 2018 review introduced the Our Manchester Behaviours into Recruitment and Selection. This review incorporates the fifth Our Manchester Behaviour which was developed in direct response to the Race Review and the WES:

- We show that we value our differences and treat people fairly

2.8 The revised policy shows that we remain committed to the Mpeople principles. Those employees who are without a funded role will continue to be matched against vacancies that arise, before they are advertised.

3.0 Policy engagement

3.1 All staff network groups have been given opportunity to comment on the revised policy.

3.2 Formal and informal Trade Union consultation has taken place.

3.3 HR Business Partners, the Talent and Diversity Lead, and the HR Casework Team Manager have been asked for comment on the policy.

3.4 Review of the policy is taking place within and alongside a wider project on inclusive recruitment led by Organisational Development colleagues.

3.5 Feedback from all these groups has been fed into the policy. We have agreed with Trade Unions to review the impacts of the new provisions after 6 and 12 months.

4.0 Policy content

4.1 The revised policy is appended below. It sets out the Council's approach to Recruitment and Selection given the above mentioned internal and external context and reflects current legislation, best practice in the field, and current organisational priorities and strategy.

4.2 The main changes reflect the strategic aims of the Workforce Equality Strategy and include:

- Reaffirming our commitment to diverse panels.
- Expansion of the concept of reasonable adjustments to allow any candidate to request a change to the process that would allow them to thrive during assessment.
- Incorporation of the 5th Our Manchester Behaviour.
- Incorporation of the "zero tolerance" statement regarding discrimination.
- Clearer description of process steps within the policy, including pre-recruitment and post-recruitment activity.
- Introduction of the principle that, normally, roles will be advertised internally and externally at the same time.
- The commitment that all recruitment activity, including "reach out" opportunities, are processed through Eploy, the Council's Applicant Tracking System (ATS),
- The addition of some guiding principles on advertising.
- A slight change to the process where a panel member perceives a potential conflict of interest where they have some kind of relationship with a candidate. Panel members are asked to seek HR advice before stepping

away from their panel duties, where currently the policy asks that panel members step away as soon as they realise they have a personal or business relationship with a candidate. The change is to prevent panel members from stepping away from the recruitment process unnecessarily where there is not a conflict of interest.

- 4.3 There have been no significant legislative changes requiring change to our Recruitment and Selection Policy or processes.
- 4.4 Underpinning our approach to recruitment and selection is the CIPD's A Guide to Inclusive Recruitment. Further work is ongoing to embed the principles contained in the guide into recruitment behaviours within the Council.
- 4.5 The policy will be accompanied by comprehensive guidance. This will be published on the intranet along with the policy and updated content.

5.0 Recruitment and Selection Policy: Approach to Implementation

- 5.1 Detailed guidance, which already exists on the intranet, is in the process of being revised and published for staff and managers with the aim of embedding the core themes and expected behaviours. The [CIPD Guide To Inclusive Recruitment](#) will be used to inform the content of this guidance.
- 5.2 Training has already been commissioned from SOLACE and is being rolled out to managers who are Grade 10 and above initially. The training will continue through to April 2024.

6.0 Comments from Trade Unions

- 6.1 No comments offered for this report.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Personnel Committee are requested to approve the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy.