

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - 7 November 2024

Subject: Workforce Strategy Progress Update (incl. Workforce Equalities and Health and Wellbeing)

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

The report provides the Committee with an overview of the Council's Workforce Strategy and highlights the progress and achievements made to build a talented, diverse and thriving workforce that has the capacity and capability to deliver the Corporate Plan, Our Manchester Strategy and deliver excellent services to residents.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Comment on the progress the Council has made to deliver against the priorities within the Workforce Strategy.
 2. Comment on the progress the Council has made to deliver the Workforce Equality Strategy.
 3. Comment on the new Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2027.
-

Wards Affected: All Wards

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>The strategy ensures that our workforce has the capacity, skills and knowledge to support the Council's zero carbon ambitions. This is specifically demonstrated in training our workforce in Carbon Literacy.</p>
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to consider equality across their work. The Council's workforce strategy makes clear our commitment to ensuring our workforce is diverse at all levels and our workplace is inclusive. The Workforce Equality Strategy sets out specific activities and interventions which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equalities and address inequalities. • Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. • Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local residents. The Workforce strategy will set out the Council's approach to providing jobs within the Council in an inclusive way that ensures a diverse workforce that reflects the communities served.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local citizens. Our Workforce Strategy will set out the Council's approach for ongoing development of skills and talent.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local citizens. Our Workforce Strategy will set out the Council's ambitions in this regard.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Workforce Strategy sets out the ambition for the Council's workforce in terms of skills, knowledge and ways of working. Initiatives detailed in our workforce strategy will have a positive impact on the Council's ability to achieve all of its priorities and thus should have a positive impact on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Workforce Strategy demonstrates how the Council will support its employees to contribute to this outcome; ensure employees are properly equipped with the skills required to use technology effectively and deliver services appropriately in the future.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There are no direct financial consequences arising specifically from this report.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital consequences arising specifically from this report.

Contact Officers:

Name: Mark Bennett
Position: Director of Human Resources, Organisation Development & Transformation
Telephone: 0161 234 5200
E-mail: mark.bennett@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Suzanne Grimshaw
Position: Strategic Head of Organisation Development & Transformation
Telephone: 0161 234 5200
E-mail: suzanne.grimshaw@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Kane Joyce
Position: Head of Workforce Strategy
Telephone: 0161 234 5200
E-mail: kane.joyce@manchester.gov.uk

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.

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 12 October 2023
Workforce Equalities Update

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 12 October 2023
Workforce Strategy

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 November 2022
Workforce Equality Strategy Implementation Update

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 8 November 2022
Update on Health and Wellbeing Strategy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester City Council is one of the city's largest employers, with nearly 8,000 staff (7,256 full-time equivalents, FTE) delivering more than 100 services. Over the last 5 years, we have been on a journey to improve the experiences of staff in our workforce so that they are best placed and well supported to deliver great services for residents and communities across the city, and achieve the ambitions as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy.
- 1.2 2024 has seen a number of workforce related successes which currently include:
- Awarded the best employer for Health & Wellbeing at the Good Employment Charter Awards
 - Shortlisted for the best approach to diversity & inclusion at the Investors in People Awards
 - Achieved 61% engagement rate in the 2023 Staff Survey & 84% of respondents said the Council was a great place to work.
 - Hosted a Leadership Summit for the Top 500 leaders within the Council.
 - The 2024 Awards for Excellence Event received 1,553 nominations.
 - Accredited as a Good Employer by the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter
 - Accredited as a Real Living Wage Employer
 - Achieved Disability Confident Leader Status
 - Made improvements to our HR policy framework which includes Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy and amendments to Special Leave Policy and Flexible Working Policy to incorporate changes to legislation.
- 1.3 The Council is not without its challenges though in trying to position itself as an employer of choice, against a backdrop of reduced funding, increased service demands, and competition with the private sector. The Council's Workforce Strategy supports us to address some of these challenges, by aligning our work programme to the key priorities, ensuring we are focusing on how and where we can collectively have the greatest impact.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the progress that has been made over the last 12 months in building a talented, diverse, and thriving workforce, with further detail provided specifically on workforce equality, diversity and inclusion.

2.0 Manchester City Council Workforce Strategy

- 2.1 The Council's Workforce Strategy sets out our overall workforce vision, provides strategic direction, sets clear outcomes that we are aiming to achieve and is the 'golden thread' which aligns our workforce to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, Our Manchester Strategy and the residents of Manchester.

- 2.2 Ultimately, the workforce strategy ensures that we address our current and future challenges and opportunities and ensures that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost.
- 2.3 The five strategic priorities within the workforce strategy are:
1. Attract, develop and retain diverse talent
 2. An inclusive employer that represents the communities that we serve at all levels
 3. Develop world-class leaders and managers
 4. High performing workforce that delivers great services for our residents
 5. Healthy, engaged and thriving workforce.
- 2.4 These priorities have been developed through understanding the challenges and opportunities that the Council faces, working with our Directorates to understand local priorities through annual workforce planning, understanding our workforce intelligence and staff survey findings and being clear about what we want the Council to look like in the future.
- 2.5 Whilst the workforce strategy sets the overall strategic priorities for the workforce; the priorities are collectively delivered through the following plans:
- Talent Plan
 - Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
 - Organisation Development Plan
 - Health and Wellbeing Plan
- 2.6 Each of the plans are interconnected and collectively deliver the strategic priorities set out within the workforce strategy.

3.0 Talent Plan

- 3.1 The Talent Plan sets out how we will attract, develop and retain diverse talent at all levels of the Council focusing on four key areas:
1. Improving approaches to recruitment and retention
 2. Strengthening pathways into MCC employment
 3. Strengthening internal pathway
 4. Maximising Graduates, Apprenticeships, Work Experience and Internships.
- 3.2 The delivery of the plan plays a crucial part in improving employee satisfaction, and supporting staff to access high-quality, meaningful work with the right skills and opportunities for progression and development.
- 3.3 The activities we have delivered in the last 12 months include:
- As part of our Employer brand work, we are developing a “**More than a job, this is Manchester**” campaign which aims to develop a modern employer brand identity, with a focus on the overall higher purpose our job roles help to achieve. A council-wide employer brand video has recently been completed and is now live.

- In September 2024, 22 Manchester young people (16 and 17 years old) started employment with the organisation as part of our inaugural school & college leaver programme.
- All 16 graduates who started our corporate graduate scheme in September 2023 continue to be supported in their professional development journey.
- Set a corporate apprenticeship target of 200 (which is double the previous year). Since April 2024, there have been 75 new apprenticeship starts.
- 52.1% of the Apprenticeship Levy was spent in 2023 - average for Councils in England is 45.8%
- We have supported 3 students on the First-Generation programme at Manchester Metropolitan University to secure 12 months paid internships with us. These students are the first in their families to ever attend university.
- In June 2024, workshop promoting MCC as an employer of choice delivered to 35 South Asian women in North Manchester.
- In July 2024, we supported 24 Manchester young people to complete their work experience with us. Young people gained exposure to an actual work environment, build vital skills and gave us the opportunity to promote the organisations as an employer of choice for the future.
- In May 2024, 12 young people completed their T-Level industry placement with us (45 days). This was the first time we, as an organisation, have supported T-Level students. Following the placement, one young person secured a permanent position within the legal team.
- We continue to support cohorts of disabled young people each year, through our partnership with Pure Innovation and The Manchester College, providing work experience both in the council and with other organisations in the city. The programme is now in its 14th year.
- Expansion of talent and development related questions in the 2024 Staff Survey which will help to understand more about the experiences across different teams, staff groups and explore links with health & wellbeing and manager support for example.
- 2023 Staff Survey highlighted that 80% of respondents are encouraged and supported to develop new skills and to learn.

4.0 Health and Wellbeing Plan

- 4.1 The Health & Wellbeing Plan launched in 2024 and sets out how we will build a healthy and high-performing workforce through promoting, prioritising and improving the wellbeing of our diverse workforce. Throughout the plan there is

a strong emphasis on tackling underlying challenges that contribute to poor health and wellbeing, leadership and supporting managers to provide more effective support to staff.

4.2 The plan focuses on six strategic priorities:

1. Promote and encourage good mental health and wellbeing
2. Empower staff to make good physical health and lifestyle choices
3. Embed good wellbeing practices in our leadership
4. Strengthen health and wellbeing communications and engagement
5. Grow our inclusive and accessible financial wellbeing offer
6. Healthy and inclusive workplace

4.3 Since the launch of the plan:

- The Executive Director of Adult Social Care has been appointed as the Senior Management Team Lead for employee wellbeing. This is an important role which demonstrates senior leadership commitment to improving employee wellbeing.
- A directorate lead has been identified in each area who is responsible for leading on health and wellbeing, ensuring the plan is embedded and local challenges are effectively addressed
- Over 400 managers have completed the "Managing Mental Health in the Workplace" training, delivered by the Manchester Stress Institute.
- Recruited over 100 Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors across the organisation. These ambassadors are equipped to signpost colleagues to appropriate health and wellbeing resources and support.
- Developed a Trauma Action Plan to ensure we are a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive organisation.
- Committed to becoming an accredited Menopause Friendly organisation, creating a supportive, inclusive, and understanding environment for all employees affected by menopause.
- Directly engaged in person with over 1,800 staff to share the Health and Wellbeing Plan, an additional 2,500 have been reached through internal communications, intranet visits, and online briefings.
- Improving how we record and monitor sickness related to stress which will lead to enhanced data and intelligence and a better understanding of the root cause of stress. This places us in a better position to tackle and reduce workplace stress by developing targeted interventions to address root causes. Ultimately supporting our staff to be healthy, high performing, and deliver excellent services.
- 2023 Staff Survey highlighted that:
 - 83% of respondents feel supported by their manager

- 84% of respondents know where to access mental health support
- 75% of respondents know where to access financial wellbeing support
- Sickness absence has reduced since the last Health & Wellbeing update to Resources & Governance scrutiny committee in November 2023 from 14.24 average sickness days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) to 13.99.

5.0 Organisation Development Plan

- 5.1 The Organisation Development Plan takes a system-wide approach to improving the culture of the Council with a view to improving the performance of the council and its workforce. Key elements are improving the working experiences of staff, ensuring the Council has the skills and capabilities to be successful and adapt well to change, and the extent to which the values and behaviours are embedded which drive the strength-based way of working.
- 5.2 All of the work within the plan is based around a set of principles that help to ensure staff/managers are clear on what is expected of them in their roles, they are able to access support to get things right, know whether or not things are going well, and the appropriate measures are in place to support people to get back on track or take the necessary course of action.
- 5.3 Since launching the Good Managers Guide in May 2023, work has continued to build manager capability, confidence and set clear expectations for our managers to be the best that they can be. This programme of activity is predicated on supporting managers to make good decisions and provides a range of support, materials and training and has been well received by our managers. Over the past 12 months:
- 1,367 managers attending the initial Good Manager Guide briefing
 - 243 attending the Good Manager Masterclass
 - 798 managers joining our thematic webinars including managing performance, looking after wellbeing, giving feedback, building inclusive teams and supporting staff during menopause.
 - Over 1,000 Managers accessing support and advice via the Good Manager Hub on the intranet
 - Monthly dedicated Team Talk broadcast for managers
 - Individuals are sharing the impact that this is having on navigating being a new manager, as well existing managers reflecting on how they have developed as result of this work.
 - Staff Survey 2023 showed an improvement in staff feeling well supported by their manager, and managers also feeling support to do this role well

6.0 The Workforce Equality Strategy/Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

- 6.1 The Council is committed to advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and in 2021, we launched our first Workforce Equality Strategy which sets out a plan to be a place where our workforce fully reflects the rich diversity and talent of the communities we serve at all levels and is a place where everyone

can be themselves and thrive. The strategy includes the recommendations from the 2019 independent Race Review.

- 6.2 The strategy sets out the importance of ensuring our diverse employees are protected from discrimination in any form, have access to development and can progress through the council's structures, are treated with respect, have good and fulfilling work to do and can bring their whole selves to work.
- 6.3 We are committed to ensuring that our managers and leaders understand and continually demonstrate their commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Our policies and processes need to be fair and not discriminate against any group or community and all managers and leaders need to understand how to support their employees, monitor equality and address any issues quickly.
- 6.4 The strategy has been based on learning from the past but more importantly from engaging with colleagues, understanding their experiences, and asking them what they wanted to change.
- 6.5 The strategy sets out six summary aims:
 1. Our workforce fully reflects our communities at all levels
 2. We talk openly and frequently about equality and inclusion
 3. Staff have access to develop and fulfil their potential
 4. Staff will feel free to bring their whole selves to work
 5. Policies and processes are fair and do not discriminate against any group or community
 6. Managers and leaders understand how to support their employees, monitor equality, and address any issues quickly
- 6.6 We have made good progress to deliver the Workforce Equality Strategy and the recommendations from the Race Review, but we know that we need to do more to make sure that our workforce reflects the diversity of our city, and we want our people to feel a strong sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that if we do this then we will make better decisions, deliver better inclusive services and connect the city council more closely to our residents.

7.0 Delivering the Workforce Equality Strategy and Race Review

- 7.1 This section provides an overview of the progress we've made to deliver the Workforce Equality Strategy & the recommendations from the Race Review.
- 7.2 The Workforce Equality Strategy has a total of 47 actions across 6 strands. Of these actions, 45 are completed and 2 are in progress.
- 7.3 The Race Review action plan, which forms part of the Workforce Equality Strategy, has 27 recommendations across five broad themes of Comms and Engagement, Policy, Learning and Development, Leadership, and Monitoring. Of these actions, 26 are completed, 1 is in progress.
- 7.4 The actions that are still in progress

- 95% of SLG to attend inclusive leadership: currently at 82% with plans to train the remaining leaders in the next 6 months. The vast majority of these are new starters.
- Update the capability policy: the policy is currently under review and is due to be approved at Personnel Committee by Q1 2025.
- Become an Age Friendly Employer: we have signed the age friendly pledge and developed an action plan with the age equality network and age friendly Manchester team which focuses on promoting age inclusivity across the workforce.

8.0 Key achievements in the last 12 months

8.1 This section provides a summary of the key activities that we have delivered in the last 12 months.

8.2 Leadership

8.2.1 Senior Workforce Equality Objectives: all senior leaders have a personal workforce equality objective which forms part of the senior appraisal. Objectives are aligned to the delivery of the Workforce Equality Strategy. Pay progression is linked to the successful achievement of objectives.

8.2.2 Inclusive Leadership: inclusive leadership is designed to equip our leaders with the confidence and skills to enhance inclusion in the workplace, as well as role model inclusive behaviours in their everyday interactions. The session explores inclusive leaders using a conscious inclusion model of leadership and creates a safe space for participants to learn, reflect and encourage peer to peer learning. To date 82% of senior leaders (SS+) have attended.

8.2.3 Race & Health Equity Programme: Making Manchester Fairer states that we will tackle systemic racism and discrimination. To support this, we have developed a Race & Health Equity programme for leaders across the city to:

- Have an increased awareness and understanding to describe and examine racism and discrimination in its structural, institutional, and individual forms and its impact on health outcomes and inequalities
- Further develop their skills, knowledge, and expertise to implement anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices both on a systemic and individual level
- Build confidence to challenge racism and discrimination in the workplace and engage inclusively with communities that experience racial inequality
- Share learning and best practice and create equity and inequalities champions across Manchester
- Take increased responsibility for their role(s) in contributing to these new ways of working to produce a wider impact and make more intentional choices about how they act to address inequalities
- 26 MCC leaders have attended this. A further cohort is being arranged for 2025.

8.3 Management

- 8.3.1 Managers play a vital role in championing EDI and developing inclusive teams. They have a great deal of influence on day-to-day behaviour and culture, their behaviour and style influences how staff experience the workplace. 84% of respondents in the 2023 Annual Staff Survey said that they feel that they are getting enough support from their manager.
- 8.3.2 Managers have a key role in ensuring staff are treated with respect, are supported to develop and feel valued and have a say in the workplace.
- 8.3.3 As set out in section 5, we have invested in management capability through the launch of the Good Manager Guide which makes clear that managers must actively champion equality, diversity and inclusion which includes:
- promote an inclusive, respectful and safe working environment where everyone can be their true self and fulfil their potential.
 - Seek opportunities to build understanding of equality and inclusion to help tackle inequalities and promote equity in the workforce.
 - Help teams understand their roles in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Uphold the Council's zero tolerance approach to discrimination or unwanted behaviour.

8.4 Education, Development & Learning

- 8.4.1 In the last 12 months, a grand total of 5,197 staff have accessed EDI training for a total of 10,432 hours. Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of all the available EDI related training with an overview of attendance rates.
- 8.4.2 Positive Action Programmes: Our positive action programmes were designed as direct responses to the 2019 Workforce Race Equality Report and, along with the wider work on workforce equality and talent development, aim to rebalance the narrative on racial equality within the organisation. We have two programmes which are designed to build confidence and drive internal progression at more senior levels.
- 8.4.3 The Leadership Pathway Programme is for our Black Asian & Minority Ethnic staff, aiming to build on existing skills and capabilities and provide staff with experience and exposure with working at a more senior level to their current grade. We have delivered 6 programmes to date:
- 137 staff attended
 - 32% have secured promotions.
- 8.4.4 The LeadHership Programme is for our Black Asian & Minority Ethnic women and the aim of this programme is to bring women together to take an honest look at who they are, what they want and how they can work to achieve their ambitions. We have delivered 4 programmes to date:
- 51 women attended
 - 39% have secured promotions.

- 8.4.5 Let's Talk About Race: Let's Talk About Race is our race equality training which was introduced as a direct response to the Race Review. The programme covers understanding the nature of systemic racism, Racial micro-aggressions, Tokenism, White privilege.
- 8.4.6 Team conversation allows staff to create the space to have conversations to build awareness and understanding, addressing inequality and work together to make sure we are an anti-racist organisation.
- 8.4.7 To date, 53.5% of the workforce has completed the programme (compared to 33% last year)
- 8.4.8 Let's Talk About Race training is delivered in-house and the current model relies on staff volunteers facilitating/delivering the training. This approach has been positive for some services/directorates. However, following an evaluation, we highlighted a range of challenges that represent barriers to fully rolling out the training:
- Capacity of our workforce to deliver training particularly frontline services.
 - Staff with limited understanding of race and race equality delivering complex and often contentious topics
 - Staff with limited training and facilitation experience delivering training impacts the quality and effectiveness of the training.
 - Concerns with the quality of wellbeing support and signposting for staff impacted by the training
- 8.4.9 We have made a commitment to review the delivery model to address these challenges and ensure we maximise the impact and effectiveness of Let's Talk About Race training. This includes an options appraisal which includes commissioning an external training provider that specialises in race equality to deliver the training.
- 8.4.10 Public Sector Equality Duty: To support the Council to achieve its Equality Objectives (2024 – 2027) and deliver inclusive services that meet the needs of our residents, we are rolling out training to build knowledge, confidence and improve the quality and effectiveness of Equality Impact Assessment and understanding the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 8.4.11 The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act 2010 and requires public sector bodies to promote equality by eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equal opportunities, and fostering good relations between those with and without protected characteristics.
- 8.4.12 The training covers the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and its practical applications, including how to conduct effective Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs). It covers the benefits and legal requirements of EqIAs, identifies common pitfalls, and provides strategies to avoid them. The training also addresses different types of discrimination and the use of equality profiling information, and includes practical exercises based on real Council examples

- 8.4.13 Trans Awareness: to support our ambition of becoming a trans inclusive employer, we have rolled out trans awareness training to build knowledge and confidence. The training covers the context of trans identities, language use, relevant legislation and strategies to ensure organisations are being trans-inclusive.
- 8.4.14 Social Model of Disability: the Disability Action Plan sets out that we will embed the social model of disability in our decision-making, policies, processes and practices. The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, people's attitudes, the way we communicate, society and how organisations are run. The training focuses on finding solutions to common barriers faced by disabled people, making workplace adjustments, and includes exercises to apply the model to real-life scenarios, along with action planning.
- 8.4.15 Neurodiversity Awareness: the Disability Action Plan sets out our ambition to become a neuroinclusive employer and to achieve this, we want to improve the organisation's knowledge, understanding and confidence of neurodiversity. To support this, we are currently pilot neurodiversity awareness training which covers building understanding of neurodiversity, the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, the importance of inclusive language, and explores workplace discrimination against neurodivergent people. The training also focuses on co-production, supporting neurodivergent staff, intersectionality, workplace adjustments, and provides best practices and resources.
- 8.4.16 Mentoring: 85 leaders are mentoring a Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employee or a disabled employee. Employees have said that having a mentoring has really helped with confidence and securing promotions.
- 8.4.17 Reverse Mentoring: the aim of our reverse mentoring scheme is for Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic staff to share their lived experiences as mentors, with senior leadership who are their mentees. These relationships will challenge engrained views on what talent looks like, breakdown stereotypes and biases, provide a unique opportunity for mentors to share insights and experience and provide senior leaders with a fresh perspective. We have delivered 2 cohorts since June 2022. Our 3rd cohort commenced in March 2024.

9.0 Staff Network Groups

- 9.1 There are 10 Staff Equality Networks. The Networks form an important part of the EDI infrastructure as they support the Council to understand the experience of our diverse workforce and play an important role in influencing our approach to workforce equalities.
- 9.2 The Network chairs attend monthly meetings with HROD&T. Each Network has a set of priorities that we are supporting with. They also attend the Corporate Equality Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Group (CEDILG) to

ensure that the voice of our employees is heard. These meetings provide opportunities for our workforce to develop, influence and contribute to the delivery of the Workforce Equality Strategy.

9.3 Key activities delivered by the Networks:

- Race Equality Network has led the Council's Black History Month celebrations.
- Young Person's Network has arranged career development panels which is an opportunity for MCC leaders to share their career experiences, challenges and advice to our young people.
- Neurodiversity Network hosted a webinar with Dr Shirley Woods-Gallagher during Neurodiversity Celebration Week.
- Women's Equality Network hosted a menopause event with the Manchester Stress Institute.

10.0 Communication & Engagement

10.1 We continue to raise awareness and participate in promoting and celebrating equality, diversity and inclusion in our communications. All of which provide support and recognise the importance of representation of our diverse workforce. Highlights include:

- Bangladeshi Heritage: Festivals, Creativity and Resilience
- Black History Month
- Deaf Awareness Week
- Disability History Month
- International Women's Day
- Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week
- Navigating My Dual Identity: Being British Pakistani
- Ramadan
- Transgender Day of Visibility
- South Asian Heritage Month

11.0 Policy, Process & Systems

11.1 Workforce Equality Statement: In August 2024, Personnel Committee approved our Workforce Equalities Statement (previously titled: Equality Opportunities in Employment policy). The policy statement sets out our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in employment and how we will ensure EDI is embedded in all our employment practices which include recruitment, training, policies, performance, development, and terms and conditions.

11.2 Zero tolerance: The Council has a strict zero tolerance policy which makes clear that we do not tolerate any form of discrimination and any behaviour that makes staff feel unwanted or excluded. We believe that everyone has the right to come to work and feel safe, valued and respected. No one should be made to feel uncomfortable or that they don't belong. To ensure the policy is well embedded and understood across the whole workforce, we regularly promote and communicate the policy in corporate and directorate communications. Our latest campaign included:

- A message from SMT Lead for Equalities. She emphasised the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment for all.
- A series of staff videos where staff explained what zero tolerance means to them personally based on their identity.
- How staff should report incidents that go against our zero-tolerance policy

11.3 Third Party Abuse & Harassment: The Council also has a strict zero tolerance policy to any form of abuse or harassment from service users or residents. To ensure the policy is well embedded in services, we've arranged and delivered online briefings for managers. These briefings ensure managers have the knowledge and confidence to effectively deal with third party abuse and are equipped to provide good support to staff. These briefings are especially important given the racist and Islamophobic disorder that took place across the country and locally.

11.4 Workplace Adjustment Hub: In January, we launched the Workplace Adjustment Hub which provides support, advice and guidance to disabled employees, employees with long-term health conditions and managers on workplace (reasonable) adjustments. The Hub was co-designed with our Staff Equality Networks (Disabled Staff Network, Neurodiversity Staff Network & Mental Health Staff Network) to ensure the service meets the needs of our diverse workforce and supports our people to thrive at work. Since the launch of the Hub:

- 180 referrals/request for support
- Approximately a third of requests are related to neurodiversity
- The most common adjustments are flexible working, noise reduction in the office, and assistive software to support dyslexia/visual impairments.

12.0 Disciplinary process

12.1 In 2019/20 we found that Black, Asian and Minority ethnic staff were twice as likely to be subject to a disciplinary process than their white colleagues, accounting for 38% of all cases.

12.2 We took immediate action through a series of interventions to reduce this imbalance. The HR Casework Team continues to support managers to filter out issues that can be addressed informally and to avoid unnecessary application of the disciplinary policy.

12.3 When the Disciplinary Policy was revised in 2021 far greater emphasis was placed on the conduct of preliminary enquiries before committing to a formal investigation. The purpose being to check the validity of allegations and establish legitimate grounds for a formal investigation to take place.

12.4 This provides the employee with an early opportunity to discuss issues before any formal action is taken and the manager time to consider whether other potential resolutions would be appropriate without reliance upon formal proceedings.

- 12.5 As a result, the number of cases where managers committed to a disciplinary investigation that subsequently concluded with no formal action taken has reduced from 16% of all cases in 2019/20 to 5.8% in 2023/24. This is a further reduction on the 8% reported in the last report to Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee in October 2023.
- 12.6 Since 2019, we have reduced the proportion of disciplinary cases for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees from 38% to 24% in 2022/23 and 26% in 2023/24.

13.0 Further activities to advance equalities

- 13.1 To achieve the ambitions of the Workforce Equality Strategy, there are a number of activities that we have delivered (or are delivering). These activities are not captured within the current strategy however, the activities contribute towards achieving our ambition of becoming an inclusive and diverse employer. These activities include:
- 13.2 Delivering the Disability Action Plan: The plan was co-designed with disabled staff and sets out our commitment to attracting, developing and retaining disabled employees and employees with long-term health conditions; ensuring our workplace is inclusive, accessible and supports people to thrive. The plan focuses on key areas such as embedding the Social Model of Disability, ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and improving disability related education and learning.
- 13.3 Directorate Equalities Plans: Supporting directorates to develop and deliver equality action plans which are aligned to the Workforce Equalities Strategy and ensures action is taking place across directorates and services to advance equality, diversity and inclusion. Each Directorate has an action plan.
- 13.4 Strengthening our EDI infrastructure: as set out in section 15, our EDI infrastructure is critical to the success of our strategic ambitions; ensuring that EDI is championed and embedded at all levels of the Council. We are currently reviewing the infrastructure which focuses on ensuring that we maximise the impact and effectiveness of EDI resources by:
- Developing clear and consistent roles that are well supported
 - Aligning the EDI infrastructure to the delivery of the Council's Equality Objectives 2024 – 27 and Workforce EDI Strategy; with leaders, champions and staff networks collectively contributing to the Council's strategic and operational priorities.
- 13.5 Preparing for the implementation of the Workers Protection Act: the Act requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and we have been updating key policies and guidance to ensure the Worker Protection Act 2023 is embedded (e.g. disciplinary policy, zero tolerance and third-party abuse and harassment)

13.6 Staff survey discrimination questions: In the 2024 survey, staff will be able to share whether they have witnessed or experienced discrimination at work. This includes from another colleague and/or member of the general public/resident. This insight helps us to further understand the experiences of staff to inform next year's work programme.

14.0 Understanding the impact of the strategy

14.1 We continue to make good progress against our strategic equality, diversity and inclusion vision of becoming a diverse and inclusive employer which is evidenced by:

14.1.1 Increasing the representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees overall and at a senior level (see below table)

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity Employees (headcount & representation percentage)						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Overall	1407 (20%)	1504 (22.5%)	1542 (21.2%)	1544 (21.3%)	1602 (21.8%)	1,933 (24.6%)
G10+	26 (5.8%)	27 (6.5%)	35 (6.9%)	54 (9.4%)	65 (10.6%)	81 (14.4%)
SS+	4 (3.5%)	5 (4.7%)	6 (4.9%)	9 (6.6%)	10 (6.7%)	11 (6.9%)

14.1.2 Continuing to increase the representation of Disabled employees and employees with long-term health conditions overall and at a senior level (see below table)

Disabled employees or employees with a long-term health condition (headcount & representation percentage)						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Overall	349 (5%)	346 (5.2%)	343 (4.7%)	576 (7.9%)	590 (8%)	700 (8.9%)
G10+	15 (3.4%)	15 (3.6%)	16 (3.2%)	44 (7.7%)	49 (8%)	48 (8.5%)
SS+	3 (2.6%)	2 (1.9%)	2 (1.6%)	8 (5.8%)	9 (6%)	12 (7.5%)

14.1.3 Continually reduced the gender pay gap (see below table)

Gender Pay Gap	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mean	9%	8.1%	8%	6.6%	4.6%	3.6%
Median	9.8%	9.8%	7.9%	6.3%	3.1%	1.1%

14.2 The staff survey allows us to understand the experience of our diverse workforce and the impact of our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. Key headlines from 2023 include:

- 61% of staff responded to the staff survey
- 85% of respondents said that they are seeing improvements across all areas of equalities
- 83% of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging at the Council
- 85% of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic respondents can see improvements to race
- 88% of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic respondents would recommend the Council as a great place to work.
- 77% of disabled respondents can see improvements to disability.
- 79% of disabled respondents would recommend the Council as a great place to work.

15.0 EDI infrastructure

15.1 We have developed a robust EDI infrastructure which ensures there is a whole Council approach to advancing and embedding EDI which means we are in the best position to effect sustainable change and impact and has strong governance and accountability arrangements which provides internal scrutiny and oversight of the Council's performance, approach and impact.

15.2 The EDI infrastructure includes key roles/functions:

- Corporate Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Group (CEDILG): CEDILG is chaired by Cllr Midgley, Deputy Leader of the Council and the City Solicitor and provides assurance that throughout the organisation actions are taken to advance EDI. The group includes senior leaders, equality networks and trade unions.
- Directorate Equalities Leads: Leads are an important part of the Council's leadership of EDI. The roles provide visible senior leadership of EDI within a directorate and lead on the development and delivery of directorate equality plans.
- Directorate Equalities Champions: Each service has a Champion who leads on embedding EDI and driving change at a service-level.
- Staff Equality Networks: Networks provide a safe space for our diverse workforce to share experience and are supported to develop, influence and contribute to the Council's EDI journey.

15.3 The infrastructure has played an important role in the progress and impact that the Council has made by ensuring a whole council approach to advancing EDI and highlighting areas of good practice and development and providing support and critical challenge.

16.0 The New Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

16.1 Building on the successes of our current Workforce Equality Strategy, we're embarking on the next phase of our equality, diversity, and inclusion journey.

- 16.2 We have refreshed the Workforce Equality Strategy which sets out six new priorities that we will deliver against to accelerate our EDI journey, address our key challenges and create the conditions for a truly inclusive Council that delivers excellent services to residents. Our refreshed strategy aims to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion into everything that we do. This will help us to attract, develop and retain diverse talent, improve staff experiences, enhance organisational performance and ensure that the Council meets the needs of the diverse communities that we serve.
- 16.3 To create a strategy that truly reflects the voices and experiences of our workforce, we undertook an extensive research and engagement which included:
- Established a diverse project group with representatives from across the Council.
 - Analysed the staff survey by equality groups
 - Analysed workforce intelligence (e.g. representation levels and casework insights)
 - Held an engagement workshop with Staff Equality Networks (over 100 staff attended)
 - Interviewed over 40 diverse staff and managers
 - Engaged the Senior Leadership Group
 - Focus groups with Directorate Equality Leads and Trade Unions
- 16.4 We engaged with over 150 diverse staff (Appendix 2 is an overview of who we engaged), which enabled us to really understand what is working well, what isn't, where we needed to improve and most importantly, what is important to our diverse workforce.
- 16.5 The engagement highlighted that we are making positive progress towards achieving our vision of building a workforce that represents the communities that we serve at all levels and is a place where staff feel safe, valued and respected. However, it also highlighted that there continues to be areas for improvement.
- 16.6 The findings from the engagement helped to shape and inform the new strategy and through careful analysis and co-design with our diverse project group, we developed a strategy which sets out the priorities we will focus on and deliver against to achieve our EDI ambitions:
1. Inclusive and accountable leadership
 2. Being a good line manager
 3. Race and anti-racism
 4. Disability and neurodiversity
 5. Attract, develop and retain diverse talent
 6. Equitable and Inclusive workplace
- 16.7 The strategy will launch in November via an extensive city-wide campaign which is designed to raise awareness and embed the strategy; ensuring everyone across our workforce is clear on what is expected of them and are

connected to, and clear about, our commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion.

16.8 A final, publishable, version of the strategy is being reworked by corporate communication. Appendix 3 is an early preview which includes our priorities, actions, measures of success and diversity targets.

17.0 Diversity targets

17.1 We have set workforce diversity targets to support our commitment for our workforce to better reflect the communities we serve at all levels. The targets are for Race and Disability, which are key priorities in the new strategy and recognises the under-representation and barriers these communities face.

17.2 The targets are based on ensuring our workforce is reflective of Manchester’s economically active population by 2027. The focus on the economically active population is strategic and intentional, as it represents the talent pool from which we can recruit from.

17.3 These targets are informed by our recruitment and retention trends and, more importantly, our commitment to doing things differently to achieve change. This includes strengthening our approach to inclusive recruitment and undertaking more community engagement to promote the council as an employer of choice to our diverse communities.

17.4 Targets are based on broad ethnic and disability groups. We will continue to monitor all ethnicities and disabilities to inform how we target and attract communities. For example, South Asian staff are significantly under-represented in the Council which led to targeted engagement with South Asian women in North Manchester in June 2024.

17.5 We will continue to monitor all protected characteristics and the experiences of all our workforce, and we will act as required.

17.6 Setting these targets enables us to better understand our progress, opportunities and the challenges we face.

Target		2024	2025	2026	2027
Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic	Overall	24%	27%	31%	37%
	Grade 10 - 12	14%	17%	21%	26%
	SS Grades	6%	9%	13%	19%
Disability and long-term health conditions	Overall	8.8%	8.8%	9.5%	10.2%
	Grade 10 - 12	9.1%	9.8%	10.5%	11.3%
	SS Grades	6.6%	7.3%	8%	8.8%

18.0 Diversity Profile

18.1 This section provides some of key headlines from the diversity profile.

18.2 The Diversity Profile (Appendix 4) is designed to provide an insight into the diversity of the Council's workforce, the progress we are making to build a diverse workforce and highlights areas that we need to focus on.

18.3 Age

- The average age of the workforce is 47 compared to 33 for the population of Manchester.
- 0.3% (32 employees) of our workforce are aged 16-21
- 32% (2,511 employees) of our workforce are aged 55+
- 4.3% (339 staff members) of our workforce are aged 65+

18.4 Ethnicity

- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees account for 24.65% of the Council's workforce compared to 41.3% of Manchester's population.
- Since 2019, we have continually increased the representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees overall and at more senior levels.
- In the last 12 months, 303 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity new starters have joined the Council which is an increase compared to the previous year (225)
- In the last 12 months, 124 Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees left the Council which has reduced compared to the previous year (155)
- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees account for
 - 30.7% of employees at Grade 1 – 5
 - 21.4% of employees at Grade 6 - 9
 - 14.4% of employees at Grade 10 – 12
 - 6.9% of employees at SS Grade
 - The representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic employees has increased throughout each grade band when compared to last year.

18.5 Disability

- Disabled employees or employees with long-term health conditions account for 8.9% of the Council's workforce compared to 17.5% of Manchester's population
- Since 2019, we have increased the representation of disabled employees or long-term health condition overall and at more senior levels.
- The non-completion rate for disability equality monitoring in the HR system is 15%.
- Disabled employees or employees with long-term health conditions account for
 - 8.7% of employees at Grade 1 – 5
 - 9.3% of employees at Grade 6 - 9
 - 8.5% of employees at Grade 10 – 12
 - 7.5% of employees at SS Grade
 - The representation of disabled employees or employees with long-term health conditions has increased throughout each grade band when compared to last year (except for G10-12, 8.6% to 8.5%)

18.6 Gender

- Women account for 65.43% of the Council's workforce which is 15.13% above Manchester's population
- Women account for:
 - 65.8% of employees at Grade 1 – 5
 - 66.6% of employees at Grade 6 – 9
 - 60.7% of employees at Grade 10 - 12
 - 48.8% of employees at SS Grade.
 - The representation of women has increased throughout each grade band when compared to last year (except for SS Grades, 52.3% to 48.8%)

18.7 Recruitment

- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic candidates account for:
 - 62% of all applications
 - 48% of all shortlisted candidates
 - 39% of all appointments.
 - The majority of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic appointments are to G1 – G5 and G6 – G9 roles
- Disabled candidates and candidates with long-term health conditions account for:
 - 7% of all applications
 - 12% of all shortlisted candidates
 - 10% of all appointments.

19.0 Recommendations

19.1 The Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Comment on the progress the Council has made to deliver against the priorities within the Workforce Strategy
2. Comment on the progress the Council has made to deliver the Workforce Equality Strategy
3. Comment on the new Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2027.

20.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – EDI Training Overview

Appendix 2 – Workforce EDI Strategy: Engagement Overview

Appendix 3 – DRAFT - Workforce EDI Strategy 2024 – 2027

Appendix 4 – MCC Workforce Diversity Profile 2024