

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 1 September 2020

**Subject:** Update on progress of race review

**Report of:** Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

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### Summary

This paper provides an update to Members on the Council's response to issues relating to race equality, and in particular to the review carried out last year of race relations and discrimination within the City Council. It includes an update on the work being carried out by a working group established to progress the recommendations, and of consultation with Trades Unions. Members from the working group will be in attendance to update members on their areas of work.

### Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

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### Wards Affected: All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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<b>Our Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The city council should reflect the communities of Manchester fully and at all levels. This will help to create a thriving economy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The City Council must develop the skills of its own workforce and work with other partners to ensure that our workforces are skilled
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	When the City Council is fully reflective of the communities we serve, we will be an exemplar of a progressive and equitable employer
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	If we do not have diversity of thought in decision making we may not create the most

	meaningful and effective strategies for zero-carbon or other strategic aims.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Not directly relevant

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Carol Culley  
Position: Deputy Chief Executive / City Treasurer  
Telephone: 0161 234 3952  
E-mail: carol.culley@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Deb Clarke  
Position: Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development  
Telephone: 0161 600 8380  
E-mail: deb.clarke@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 four years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

The Race Review

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 In 2019, and following representations from trades unions and others, a review of race issues in the workforce of Manchester City Council was commissioned. This review was finalised in November 2020. The commission aimed to understand the extent to which our organisational culture and values, reinforced by our policy approach and behaviours, support inclusive employment practices and recognise and respect differences. The review involved assessing the effectiveness of the Council's systems, processes and policies and by taking account of the lived experience of a range of internal stakeholders (primarily Black Asian and Minority Ethnic employees, but others including Trade Unions and HR&OD). The review's key purpose was ultimately to help inform continuous improvements in the Council's approach to race equality at work.
- 1.2 In short, the review found that, notwithstanding initiatives that had been implemented in previous years, there were issues that needed to be addressed by the City Council in order to ensure fairness and equity for black, Asian and minority ethnic staff in the workforce.
- 1.3 The report was published in 2020.
- 1.4 Although the recommendations of the report were accepted and are in the process of being implemented, it has also been recognised that these recommendations are somewhat limited in that they do not also drive the City Council towards having a workforce that is fully representative of the population of the city of Manchester at all levels, nor does the report identify pathways into employment in the City Council for local people, and finally some of the nuances around 'intersectionality' are unaddressed - the particular experience of black women for example, or LGBTQ Asians. To be fair this was not part of the work commissioned, but we now understand that these are important components of achieving a diverse and talented workforce at all levels in the City Council.
- 1.5 The publication of the final report coincided with the appointment of a new Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development, and also the events leading to the growth Black Lives Matter movement in the UK and worldwide. It was clear that a renewed focus on and priority for this work was necessary and urgent.

## **2.0 Workforce Equality**

- 2.1 The Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development along with the Executive Member for Children and Schools who is currently covering the HR & OD portfolio, and the Lead Member for Equalities, whilst wanting to make swift progress on the issues identified as a result of the race review, have also identified that the City Council lacks a strategic and coherent approach to workforce equalities generally. A commitment has been made to produce a Workforce Equalities Strategy for Manchester City Council for consideration at the meeting of the Executive in November 2020. It is

important to set the work that is being done on race in this context as an overarching strategy will address some of the intersectionalities and recruitment approaches that are otherwise missing from the race review.

### **3.0 Specific work on Race**

3.1 In considering how to take forward the race review, we took into account a number of drivers;

- the need to engage and develop black, asian and minority ethnic staff on doing the work to develop actions, both as a way of ensuring that their perspective and lived experience informed every aspect of the response, and also as a way of giving development opportunities which may not otherwise have been available.
- the need to engage and develop white staff and managers who have responsibility for some of the systems, processes and policies which have been identified as being unfair or not fit for purpose in actually doing the work to listen to the experiences of black, asian and minority ethnic staff and to then make changes.
- the need to keep in mind the clear messages that we heard from black, asian and minority ethnic staff which were that there had previously been 'a lot of talk but not much action', so we wanted to adopt a methodology which would ensure that 'actions speak louder than words' was enshrined in the approach.

3.2 We therefore determined that an 'agile' approach would both be developmental for those involved and would ensure that we would be able to make swift progress. Agile is a process by which a team can manage a project by breaking it up into several stages and involving constant collaboration with stakeholders and continuous improvement and iteration at every stage. The Agile methodology begins with clients describing how the end product will be used and what problem it will solve. This clarifies the customer's expectations for the project team. Once the work begins, teams cycle through a process of planning, executing, and evaluating — which might just change the final deliverable to fit the customer's needs better. Continuous collaboration is key, both among team members and with project stakeholders, to make fully-informed decisions.

3.3 A working group has been established which consists of over 40 employees from across the organisation who are dedicating 1 day per week over a 12 week period to ensure there is adequate resource to give focus to this work and to ensure real impact can be achieved in this initial 3 month period. As stated above, it was important that the working group was balanced in terms of black, asian and minority ethnic staff and those staff who have responsibility for creating the systems, policies and culture which enable progress to be made.

3.4 The Race Equality Working Group meets virtually every week on a Wednesday. The group has been 'visited' by the Chief Executive, the Lead Member for Equalities and the Cabinet Member for Resources. It is

supported by the Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development and every week generally has some developmental input around agile methodology - for example we have learned about problem definition, minimum viable products, research methodology and prototyping. We also have a 'stand up' every week at which each of the workstream groups report back on progress they are making and what they are planning so that everyone has an overview of everyone else's work.

- 3.5 In addition to the working group, a reference group has been established, again made up of volunteers from across the organisation who act as points of research and contact for working group members.
- 3.6 The Working Group has proved to be an energetic, insightful, creative and committed group of people who have come together to progress this work. The ideas and approaches taken by the group members are innovative and inspiring. Members of the group have demonstrated a huge commitment to the work and to making Manchester City Council a place where diversity and talent is celebrated and rewarded.
- 3.7 The 27 recommendations from the original race review have been grouped into 5 broad themes which the working group are currently focused on:

#### **Monitoring**

Understanding the reasons why there are gaps in the data, how (if ) we can get better coverage of ethnicity data for our staff and how reporting can be improved so we can better monitor our equality data, target interventions and spot issues.

#### **Developing Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff**

This group is seeking to better understand how current MCC staff feel about development opportunities within the Council and what interventions would support better diversity, e.g. including composition of panels, race awareness training for all managers and a development programme for black, asian and minority ethnic staff.

#### **Engagement and communications**

This group are reviewing how we can increase visibility of black, asian and minority ethnic staff within all Corporate and Directorate communications and engagement as well as raising awareness of race equality issues and building confidence in the work of the race equality working group and in the organisation in general.

#### **HR policies**

HR policies need to be reviewed through the lens of race equality to ensure they promote equality and address issues identified through the review (particularly around development and disciplinary). The group are looking at the special leave policy in the first instance but this work will have to be replicated across all policies prioritised based on impact.

## **Leadership**

The group are reviewing options to support our leaders and managers to understand and create racial equality and better understand the lived experience of our black, asian and ethnic minority staff and are equipped to monitor the progress of race equality in their respective service areas (linked to the monitoring and development themes) and develop strategies to address any issues identified.

- 3.8 The 5 thematic groups are testing a series of interventions over this initial 12 weeks and will make a final set of recommendations at the end of September.

## **4.0 Support from Human Resources and Organisation Development**

- 4.1 It has been recognised that beyond the lifetime of the Working Group, this will be a major focus of the Human Resources and Organisation Development Team going forward. With that in mind, 2 vacant posts in HR&OD have been refocused and recruited to and will focus on, among other things, development of an Equalities Strategy, development routes internally and externally for black Asian and minority ethnic staff and working with community groups to increase representation of our communities in the Council.

- 4.2 It has also been recognised that HR&OD must be an exemplar and advocate for this work, and must fully reflect the communities of Manchester itself. With that in mind the Director of HR&OD has recently run a virtual seminar on Equalities for all staff in HR&OD. Whilst there are limited opportunities to change the profile of the workforce in HR&OD, 3 more senior appointments in the last few months have all been Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic.

## **5.0 Trades Unions**

- 5.1 Trades Unions rightly feel a great sense of ownership of the issues outlined in this report and it was their work which at least partly led to the race review being carried out in the first place. It is important to recognise that and to work closely with trades unions colleagues on these issues.
- 5.2 In discussions with trades unions it was determined that whilst the Working Group would work through the issues in the way described in this report, the Trades Unions have a unique role as representatives of the wider workforce and a statutory right to consultation. Therefore it was agreed that in parallel to the work outlined above, HR&OD would work closely with the Trade Unions to review the findings in relation to casework and working to similar timeframes will make a series of recommendations to address the disparity of experience of black asian and minority ethnic staff and their white colleagues.

## **6.0 Recommendations and Activity to Date**

- 6.1 Working in the agile way the project groups are continually researching and testing different approaches. The group will be making recommendations and implementing changes through the lifespan of the project rather than waiting until the end. Key progress to date:

- The equality data available is currently being refreshed and will include a breakdown of ethnicity and grade and progression of black asian minority ethnic staff and this will now be included in the quarterly Workforce Intelligence information all DMTs receive.
- Race Awareness training will be mandatory for all leaders and managers with a view to rolling out across the whole workforce.
- A reverse mentoring programme for senior leaders is currently being explored.
- Diverse recruitment panels will be required for recruitment at all levels and all recruitment materials will be explicit on our commitment to race equality.
- Increasing the stories and focus on regular corporate and directorate communications to include black asian and minority staff and communities.
- A programme for reviewing HR policies is being developed.

It is difficult to capture the energy, creativity and commitment of the working group, and the volume of work underway in a short report and some of the project leads will be attending Scrutiny Committee to talk to Members about the work that is underway and answer any questions.

## **7.0 Previous work on race equality and equality generally**

7.1 Manchester has a proud history of championing equality and has been at the forefront of some of the country's most significant diversity-related work for decades. The Council's strong commitment to equality and inclusion for the city's population, for our workforce and in the delivery of our services has led us to work hard to understand and meet the needs of a richly diverse range of identity groups internally and externally, and take pride in leading by example on equalities.

7.2 In recent years a number of years a range of activity focused on driving equality within the organisation, including;

- A range of equality groups have been reestablished including staff led groups, all of which have more support from the corporate centre.
- A new learning framework has been commissioned around Equality Diversity and Inclusion.
- A development programme aimed at progression to senior roles which was positively targeted at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees.
- An SMT lead for Equality was identified (the City Solicitor).
- In 2018 the Council signed up to a collective agreement by Greater Manchester public and voluntary/community sector organisations to tackle workforce inequality.
- Participants in two cohorts of RECAP (Race Equality Change Agents Programme).
- The most recent leadership summit for the Council's top 300 managers

featured two workshops on equality and inclusion led by GMP Chief Constable Ian Hopkins and the City Solicitor.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 The City Council has taken swift action and meaningfully engaged black, Asian and minority ethnic staff in developing actions in relation to bringing about diversity and inclusion at all levels in the authority. At the same time we are working on a coherent and strategic approach to workforce diversity and equality which will be submitted for Executive approval in November.
- 8.2 Trades Unions are engaged in all aspects of this work and this will continue as strategy is developed into policy and processes.
- 8.3 The Working Group and agile approaches are proving to be a successful and engaging way of ensuring both that black, asian and minority ethnic voices are heard and the lived experience of these groups informs future policy, as well as holding managers to account for changing policies, processes and culture.
- 8.4 Member support and scrutiny are important components of the progress made to date.