

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – 3 November 2020

Subject: Workforce Equality Strategy

Report of: Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Summary

We have not previously had a workforce equality strategy at Manchester City Council, and in producing this document we are aiming to rectify that omission and to use this opportunity as a springboard to make strong progress.

Manchester is always ambitious and we are aiming to be a real leader amongst public sector organisations in the North West and beyond in the clarity of our analysis, the range of our actions and our determination to make things happen to change for the better.

Manchester has a proud history of being at the forefront of the fight for equality and we rightly have high expectations of what we can achieve in our city. The Council must now step up and lead the way - setting an example of workforce equality in action, both for our city and for local Government.

Manchester is a diverse and vibrant city and the Council and those who work here should look and sound like the people we serve. To achieve that goal we need to be an open and welcoming place for our communities to seek employment- and to progress to the highest levels.

We know that inequality still exists within our city and within the Council, and that the pace of progress is still too slow. A recent race review, for example, set out some of the experiences of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and highlighted problems which we are now beginning to address, and which has informed this workforce equality strategy.

Our workforce equalities strategy is a fundamental part of our developing Manchester City Council through the Our Manchester behaviours and values, into the organisation we want to be.

We've developed this strategy using methods that are absolutely in keeping with the Our Manchester behaviours. We have worked together with staff and trades unions and taken the time to listen and understand the experience of employees from underrepresented groups. We have owned the problem of inequality in the workforce.

Our equalities strategy is about having a workforce at all levels which is from and for Manchester, building on our pride in and passion for the city.

The attached sets out a strategy for achieving workforce equality in Manchester City Council. The strategy covers many of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, specifically race, disability, age and sexuality, there is however a particular emphasis on analysis and actions relating to race equality, and in particular to the review carried out last year of race relations and discrimination within the City Council.

Recommendations

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

1. Consider the attached strategy; and
2. Give feedback on the strategy including suggestions for improvement prior to consideration by Executive Committee

Wards Affected: None

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
None

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The public sector is a major employer in Manchester so if we can recruit more from Manchester residents it will contribute to this outcome. The city council should reflect the communities of Manchester fully and at all levels.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Employees who work for the city council and live in Manchester will receive skills development.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Employees who work for the city council and live in Manchester will make a positive contribution to the city. 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	not directly relevant
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Employees who work for the city council and live in Manchester will have their technological skills improved, reducing digital deprivation

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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.

Race Review 2019 (previously published)

1.0 Introduction

- 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 2019. 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.
- 1.2 The review's key purpose was ultimately to help inform continuous improvements in the Council's approach to race equality at work.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A Race Equality Working Group was established to work on the 27 recommendations from the original race review. They were grouped into 5 themes as follows:

Monitoring

- 2.2 Understanding the reasons why there are gaps in the data, how (if) we can get better coverage of ethnicity data for all 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

- 2.3 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

- 2.4 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

- 2.5 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

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 In addition a group was formed with Trades Unions to look particularly at the over representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic People in the disciplinary process.
- 2.8 While the work was underway in relation to race and ethnicity a process of gathering data and developing recommendations in relation to age, disability and sexuality also took place to enable the council to have a more comprehensive workforce equality strategy. This is not to dilute in any way the emphasis on race equality but rather recognises the intersectionality of equalities work and the unique needs of individual groups.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recognised that will be a major focus of the Human Resources and Organisation Development directorate going forward.
- 3.2 The work and recommendations of the Working Group will need to be embedded into work plans going forward and we are currently planning how we will maintain transparency and engagement on that happening.
- 3.3 The 5 thematic groups were testing a series of interventions over the initial 14 weeks and have made a final set of recommendations based on the outcomes of these small minimal useful changes. The working party concluded on 7 October 2020. A selection of the recommendations are outlined below.

3.4 Monitoring recommendations

- Staff trust has to be gained in relation to completing the ethnicity classifications. Barriers need to be addressed and staff have to feel reassured and confident that they will not be negatively affected by this information being gathered.
- Mandatory ethnicity classification forms to be completed as part of all external and internal recruitment.
- Encourage staff to become involved with their relevant staff group.
- All staff groups to be consulted with in relation to issues that could affect staff from that group

3.5 Developing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff recommendations

- The pilot test training undertaken as part of the working party has confirmed the need for mandatory Race Awareness for all leaders and managers with a view to rolling out across the whole workforce.

- Planning underway looking at clear objectives, priorities and timescales. An options paper to be put forward to consider who will carry out the training. Will this be a full time trainer, internal group of trainers or an external organisation.
- Use HROD or agreed alternative commissioning framework to secure providers and agree course details and terms.
- Work with identified training providers to develop a train the trainers model to roll out the course as part of later phases/cohorts.
- Clear terms of reference, governance and operational structure set up to take forward the Race Equality Working Group activity, recommendations and action plan to support the work of the Project Manager(s) and the transition towards embedding this in HROD/the organisation.
- Secondment or Act up policy to be devised with the aim of providing experience and exposure for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff working at a more senior level to current grade. To ensure equity and consistency in the organisation.

3.6 Engagement and communications

- All online communication broadcasts should be reviewed for diversity and inclusion/accessibility.
- Support and encouragement to enable staff to send in their stories to feature in the broadcasts (corporate and directorate).
- Address barriers to good representation in communications.
- Engagement with staff network groups.
- Increasing the stories and focus on regular corporate and directorate communications to include black asian and minority staff and communities, as well as other underrepresented groups.

3.7 HR policies

- Clear and strong communications from senior level around the Council's aims and objectives to specifically improve the diversity of the organisation to support diversity in recruitment and to mitigate the risk of (perceived/real) tokenism.
- Ensure diverse panel members are holistically involved in the recruitment process (shortlisting to interview) and where appropriate, brief them accordingly so their contribution is meaningful allowing them to participate equally in decision making. This process will promote MCC's value on diversity and also avoid tokenism.
- Monitor and report on the diversity of all panels to measure the impact of this initiative.
- Consideration should be given to the use of 3rd parties (e.g. partners or Members) where diverse panel members cannot be found internally.
- Diverse recruitment panels will be required for recruitment at all levels and all recruitment materials will be explicit on our commitment to race equality and equality generally.

3.8 Leadership

- Manchester City Council to use evidence to develop targets for black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and other groups at every level
- Clarify the routes into the council and understand the criteria that are in place to identify how we target applicants from communities that are underrepresented.
- To begin discussions with SMT on how appointment of designated Senior Lead in each Directorate, including a black, Asian and minority ethnic lead. For each directorate that works alongside the Senior Lead.
- Development of a reverse mentoring scheme - giving leaders opportunities to explore with black, Asian and minority ethnic staff their lived experiences whilst working for the Council.

4.0 Trade Unions work on the over representation of black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in disciplinaries - recommendations

- HROD Casework managers to meet with relevant Strategic Director to discuss service areas with disproportionate disciplinary impact on BME employees. Meetings have been arranged.
- Support managers from catering, DSAS and Locality Teams to attend Race Awareness Training.
- Ensure all investigating officers attend mandatory race awareness training.
- Issues raised by employees around race will be dealt with by someone outside of the service area with a manager with relevant experience. Casework team to change their approach to advice giving and provide a greater degree of challenge to managers.
- Equality Outcomes to be monitored in About You objectives for managers
- Review Casework Policies to determine where needs are amended/strengthened from an equality point of view.
- Review recruitment and induction programmes to ensure an equality and an anti racist stance is front and centre.
- Incorporate learning into the new management standards/framework being drafted.

It should be noted as per the strategy that the Trades Unions are still working on these recommendations with us and they may change at the margins as this work concludes.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The City Council is on a journey to achieving equality and diversity and in developing, endorsing and delivering on this strategy and the actions contained within it will be taking necessary steps to accelerate and deepen the work to make progress in this area.

5.2 The support and encouragement of Members, alongside appropriate scrutiny

and overview will be a vital component in achieving what we have set out in this strategy.

5.3 In summary, delivering this strategy will mean:-

- We will be more diverse at senior levels in the city council, through progression of existing staff and external recruitment, particularly from Manchester;
- Our managers will be more confident and employees able to realise their full potential;
- We will employ more Asian and particularly Pakistani and Chinese staff;
- We will have better data on which to make decisions; and
- Our culture will be more inclusive, valuing diversity and focussed on outcomes.