

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 5

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Update on the recent action taken by the council to increase the diversity of its workforce

Date of Meeting: 2 June 2009

Report of: Director of Strategy & Governance

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Wards Affected: All All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This report has been produced in response to a specific request for information from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

1.2 It describes the action the council has taken over recent years to increase the diversity of its workforce and shows how effective the strategy has been in building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) That the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 *Community Profile:*

3.1.1 Table 1 below shows the most recent figures for the percentage of BME and disabled people who are estimated to be economically active within the Brighton and Hove area.

3.1.2 Table 1: Proportion of people from minority groups who are economically active within the local community *

BME	7.4%
Disabled	4.5%

* data source – the Office for National Statistics Population Survey Data 2006

3.2 Workforce Profile:

3.2.1 Compared with the economically active profile of the local community, minority groups have historically been under-represented within the council's workforce since it was formed in April 1997.

3.3 Initiatives designed to increase the diversity of the workforce:

3.3.1 A great deal of work has been done to improve the diversity of the council's workforce through a range of recruitment initiatives. The action taken has included:

- conducting, in conjunction with senior managers, outreach work in the community to identify issues which might prevent those from minority communities applying for jobs with the Council and promoting the organisation as the employer of choice
- attending a range of recruitment fairs and events to promote the council as an employer of choice
- running a number of innovative recruitment campaigns with an emphasis on diversity marketing. For example, we launched a national and local campaign introducing a "Working for a Diverse City" logo and jobs website to encourage people from all groups in the community to apply for our jobs. This particular campaign was enhanced locally by a "Reflecting our Communities" advertising initiative
- organising a number of presentations/workshops for minority community groups to explain our recruitment process and to help potential applicants apply for jobs with the council
- re-designing our application forms to make them more accessible
- successfully re-applying for "Two Ticks" "Positive about disabled people" status
- introducing BME, disability and LGBT mentoring schemes aimed at addressing the under-representation of these groups amongst the most senior staff within the organisation (defined as the top 5% of earners) by supporting staff to reach their full potential
- establishing a Local Employment Partnership Scheme (LEP) which has involved working with Jobcentre Plus and other partners to provide employment opportunities for those over 18 who have been unemployed for six months or more or who have a disability/mental health issues and are out of work
- ongoing consultation with the BME community and Jobcentre Plus, to find out from unemployed BME people how the council can encourage applications from this section of the community.
- recruiting a number of positive action (PATH) trainees as part of a national initiative aimed at increasing the number of BME employees in certain professions.

3.4 Effectiveness of our strategy:

3.4.1 Equalities monitoring of our workforce as well as those applying for vacancies, those shortlisted for interview and new recruits has been a key tool in enabling us to assess how successful this work has been.

Recruitment statistics:

3.4.2. Specific recruitment initiatives such as those highlighted above have resulted in the council receiving more applications from minority groups in recent years (see Table 2 below). The quality of applicants has also improved with a gradual increase being seen in the proportion of BME, disabled and LGBT candidates being shortlisted for interview and being made offers of employment.

3.4.3 **Table 2: Breakdown of applicants, candidates shortlisted for interview and offers of employment by minority group for the period 2004/05 to 2007/08**

Year	% of total who were BME			% of total who were disabled			% of total who were LGBT		
	Applicants	Interviewed	Offers	Applicants	Shortlisted	Offers	Applicants	Shortlisted	Offers
2004	9.9	6.8	6.2	3.1	3.0	3.0	12.1	11.4	12.9
2005	9.0	7.1	7.3	4.0	4.5	2.5	11.0	12.4	13.0
2006	12.9	9.1	8.1	3.7	4.9	3.3	12.9	13.0	13.8
2007	10.87	7.82	6.26	4.3	5.9	3.3	13.2	13.9	13.5

3.4.4 This success has been reflected in the gradual increase in the representation of these minority groups within the workforce (see Tables 3 and 4 below).

3.4.5 Table 3: The percentage of council employees who have declared they have a disability or who are from a minority ethnic group compared with the BVPI targets since 2004

Year	% BME employees	BVPI target Bme (%)	% disabled employees	BVPI target Disabled (%)
2004	3.36	3.7	2.56	2.8
2005	3.75	4.0	2.66	3.3
2006	3.8	4.5	2.78	4.0
2007	4.28	5.0	2.78	3.0
2008	4.45	5.5	4.45	3.0
2009	4.3	5.0	3.84	5.0

* Excludes employees on temporary or fixed term contracts with less than one years service and staff who have not declared their ethnic origin or disability status.

** There is no legal requirement for the Council to monitor the sexual orientation of applicants for vacancies or that of its employees. Consequently there is not a BVPI target for this group.

3.4.6 Table 4: The percentage of the council's top 5% of earners who have declared they have a disability or who are from a minority ethnic group compared with the BVPI targets since 2004

Year	% Bme employees	BVPI target Bme (%)	% disabled employees	BVPI target Disabled (%)
2004	0.91	3.7	No data available	
2005	1.39	2.7	No data available	
2006	1.65	2.8	1.25	0.5
2007	2.13	3.0	0.86	2.0
2008	2.4	3.0	5.09	2.0
2009	3.12	3.5	3.9	5.5

* Excludes school-based employees and those on temporary or fixed term contracts with less than one years service and staff who have not declared their ethnic origin or disability status.

** There is no legal requirement for the Council to monitor the sexual orientation of applicants for vacancies or that of its employees. Consequently there is not a BVPI target for this group.

3.4.7 Although there has been an improvement in the diversity of our workforce, including at more senior management level, work continues and specific actions designed to achieve a workforce profile that accurately reflects the diversity of the community are set out in the current Single Equality Scheme Action Plan 2008-2011.

3.4.8 An extract from the Action Plan is set out below:

- developing and maintaining a skilled, motivated, high performing and flexible workforce that reflects at all levels within the organisation, the diversity of the city's communities
- becoming the "employer of choice"
- keeping the council's recruitment strategy under review to ensure that it responds to labour market and demographic trends and supports the council's objective of achieving a workforce which reflects the diversity of the community it serves
- continuing to run innovative recruitment campaigns aimed at promoting the council as an employer of choice and increasing the diversity of the council's workforce
- continuing to attend national and local recruitment events
- continuing to monitor and analyse recruitment data at key stages to:
 - ensure a fair process and
 - to identify potential barriers to employment particularly for minority or other disadvantaged groups
- developing further the Local Employment Partnership with Jobcentre Plus to employ local people in receipt of benefits
- continuing to work in conjunction with Path National Limited to promote the positive action traineeships with the aim of increasing take-up within the council
- improving the way in which "exit" data is collected, analysed and used to inform HR strategy
- using the impact assessment process review our approach to recruitment and retention to develop a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of the City's population

3.5 *Independent recognition of our strategy:*

3.5.1 The council has received a number of awards in recognition of the quality of its diversity advertising and the success of its Local Employment Partnership scheme.

3.5.2 In addition, the council was recently ranked third (the highest ranked local authority) in Stonewall's Annual Workplace Equality Index. The accolade is awarded to firms and organisations whose employment practices and general policies best ensure fair treatment of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) community. The council's award-winning recruitment advertising campaigns, its equalities awareness training for staff and the fact that LGBT staff were represented at senior management level were particularly commended.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 As this report is for information only, no consultation was necessary.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 There are no significant financial implications of this report. Any costs associated future initiatives will be met from existing departmental budgets.

Legal Implications:

5.2 The action described in this report is taken within the overall framework of existing equalities legislation.

Equalities Implications:

5.3 The content of the report is on equalities.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no sustainability implications of this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 Failure to take appropriate action in this area would be unacceptable from both a risk and management perspective.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 This activity falls within the corporate plan and has citywide employment and equality implications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None.