Fair & Inclusive Action Plan – overview

Theme	Key Outputs	Measures
Accountability & Consequences	1.1 Staff understand expectations and **consequences** of behaviour, are confident to speak up and know where to access support	Staff survey Number of mediation cases Number of HRAS cases Timely resolution of casework Exit interview data Feedback from forums Leadership appraisal process
	1.2 Early intervention & mediation to prevent formal processes	
	1.3 Working with our Trade Unions	
	1.4 Accountability of leaders ensured via a sound performance management framework	
	1.5 Fair and more consistent application of formal employment procedures	
Learning & Development	2.1 An effective and comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion training offer	Staff survey L&D data - compliance, evaluation PDPs Workforce profile
	2.2 Mandatory induction and probation with clear expectations of behaviour	
	2.3 Positive action initiatives to develop and retain under-represented groups	
Recruitment, retention & progression	3.1 Robust and inclusive recruitment processes that are reviewed regularly for effectiveness, including fair and more consistent application of secondment, acting up and redeployment procedures	Recruitment data Workforce profile Staff survey Exit data
	3.2 Inclusive workforce & outreach strategy to raise employer brand and engage applicants from diverse communities across the city	
	3.3 Wider use of behaviour-based interviews	
	3.4 Develop and deliver a more accessible and inclusive workplace for disabled staff	

Theme	Key Outputs	Measures
	3.5 A wellbeing offer that responds to the emerging needs of staff who share particular protected characteristics	
Communities & Services	4.1 Services across the council understand and respond effectively to communities they work with and the changing demographic of the city	Staff survey Workforce profile Recruitment data Number of community engagements City Tracker
	4.2 The council has a reputation as a leader for equality and inclusion and community cohesion in the city, engaging in a joined up way with cultural events across the city	
	4.3 Staff to utilise opportunities through the Employee Volunteering Scheme to enable them to work with different communities across the city	
	4.4 The council has a reputation in Schools, College, and HE as a leader for equality and inclusion and an employer of choice in the city for young people	

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1. ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Key Outputs	Activities
1.1 Staff understand expectations and **consequences** of behaviour, are confident to speak up and know where to access support	*1.1.1 Embed the Behaviour Framework* *1.1.2 Embed a zero tolerance approach with safe spaces for issues to be raised* *1.1.3 Provide development to the Leadership Network to ensure they understand their role in leading the equality agenda*
1.2 Early intervention and mediation to resolve issues where appropriate	*1.2.1 Provide specialist equalities training for HR advisers, investigating managers and members* *1.2.2 Embed the mediation process and ensure we offer a virtual conferencing option as well as face to face*
1.3 Working with our Trade Unions	*1.3.1 Improve practice and procedure to ensure a fair and inclusive place to work*
1.4 **Accountability** of leaders ensured via a sound performance management framework	**1.4.1 Ensure the equalities measure in the rated appraisal process for leadership roles is reviewed and monitored effectively** *1.4.2 Monitor and communicate progress towards equalities objectives in the service performance management framework*
1.5 Fair and more consistent application of formal employment procedures	*1.5.1 Identify members who will sit as part of appeal hearings, and provide comprehensive equalities training* **1.5.2 Work with the member equality leads to develop and deliver a plan of action to support their work in championing equalities**

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2. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Key Outputs	Activities
2.1 An effective and comprehensive equality diversity & inclusion training offer	*2.1.1Develop our fair and inclusive learning and development offer, ensuring compliance with mandatory training* *2.1.2 Use the staff survey results and other data to identify and support teams with gaps in skills, providing bespoke learning and development where required* **2.1.3 Use PDP to identify individual learning needs and barriers to development in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and support development as needed** **2.1.4 Review and improve all disability-related training and development for managers and colleagues**
2.2 Mandatory induction and probation with clear expectations of behaviour	*2.2.1 Communicate values and behavioural expectations explicitly as part of the recruitment process and during induction* 2.2.2 Provide safe space for new starters to give feedback confidentially, where required
2.3 Positive action initiatives to develop and retain under-represented groups	**2.3.1 Encourage career conversations and offer targeted job shadowing, mentoring, acting ups and/or other opportunities with clear development objectives - internally and externally where relevant - through PDPs and 1-2-1s and address any barriers to access these initiatives.** **2.3.2 Develop, pilot and review a positive action learning and development programme for under-represented groups, using data analysis to ensure positive action is applied and communicated transparently across the organisation**

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3. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

Key Outputs	Activities
3.1 Robust and inclusive recruitment processes that are reviewed regularly for effectiveness, including fair and more consistent application of secondment, acting up and redeployment procedures	*3.1.1 Mandatory training for everyone on interview panels with enforced compliance monitoring* **3.1.2 Improve guidance, communication and processes for internal recruitment** **3.1.3 Review, develop and offer a range of inclusive recruitment training workshops** **3.1.4 Provide targetted support and data driven interventions during recruitment to prioritised service areas or pay bands where there is under-representation**
3.2 Inclusive workforce & outreach strategy to raise employer brand and engage applicants from diverse communities across the city	3.2.1 Identify career pathways for under-represented groups notably young people & with schools including work experience, apprenticeships and government initiatives **3.2.2 Provide corporate, directorate and service open events and workshops for communities who are under-represented at the council to increase confidence in gaining employment at the council, including recruitment of refugee communities** **3.2.3 Engage with Comms team, forums and city communities to design and develop diverse recruitment campaigns with corporate approach**
3.3 Wider use of behaviour-based interviews	3.3.1 Explore use of behaviour-based interviews across the organisation and use data analysis to target pilot area/service
3.4 Develop and deliver a more accessible and inclusive workplace for disabled staff	**3.4.1 Deliver the outcomes of the IT&D accessibility and digital inclusion workstreams** **3.4.2 Review and improve the reasonable adjustment process**
3.5 A wellbeing offer that responds to the emerging needs of staff who share particular protected characteristics	**3.5.1 Implement new Attendance Management Policy** **3.5.2 Provide opportunities for staff groups to share their experiences and be heard and responded to by leaders** **3.5.3 Ensure the council's corporate wellbeing offer is inclusive and accessible**

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4. COMMUNITIES

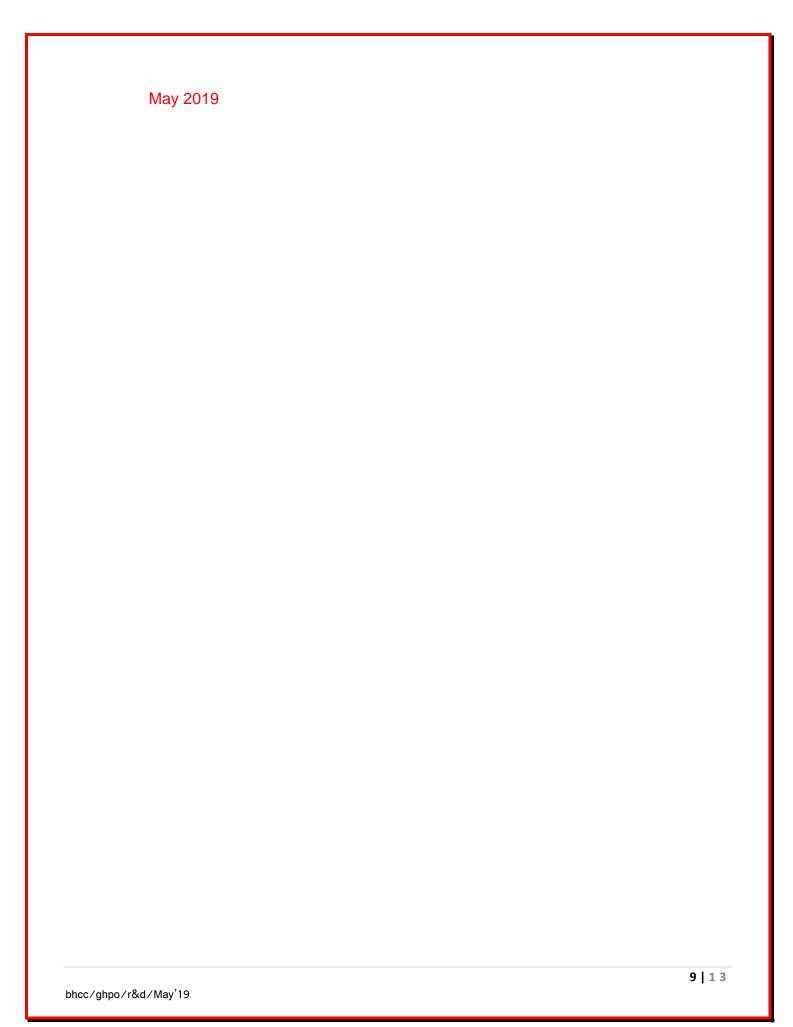| Key Outputs	Activities
4.1 Services across the council understand and respond effectively to communities they work with and the changing demographic of the city	*4.1.1 Ensure implementation and monitoring of directorate level equality plans for ensuring differences in access or outcomes for service users – related to their legally protected characteristics – are understood and addressed.* *4.1.2 Use learning and development opportunities to ensure staff are aware of the city context and equality and inclusion issues impacting on communities Brighton & Hove* 4.1.3 Engage (where possible) with local communities in the delivery of face to face or virtual learning and development opportunities so staff can learn about lived experiences and consider its practical application to service delivery. *4.1.4 Services to utilise existing council relationships with community and voluntary sector groups to support engagement with different communities when developing new services, commissions, or strategies*
4.2 The council has a reputation as a leader for equality and inclusion and community cohesion in the city, engaging in a joined up way with cultural events across the city	*4.2.1 Continue to improve our collaborative approach to community engagement and development, enabled by funding such as Third Sector Investment Programme (TSIP), to bring our services closer to the communities they work with. A focus should be on disabled people and people from BME backgrounds* **4.2.2 Continue a council-wide approach to proactively communicate equality and inclusion activities, events and progress (both external and internal)** *4.2.3 Workers Forums to develop and deliver business plans that include the celebration and promotion of key diversity events working collaboratively with colleagues (e.g Communications Team. HR, Equalities Manager).* **4.2.4 Develop with partners Anti-Racist City Strategy** **4.2.5 Develop with partners Accessible City Strategy**

	4.2.6 Continue Council's participation in the Inclusive Cities Programme and undertake a review of our City of Sanctuary status as part of this
Key Outputs	**Activities**
4.3 Staff to utilise opportunities through the Employee Volunteering Scheme to enable them to work with different communities across the city	4.3.1 Increase awareness of the Employee Volunteering Scheme including opportunities available to work within different communities. 4.3.2 Identify and promote new volunteering opportunities by working with council Workers Forums and with existing community and voluntary sector groups.
4.4 The council has a reputation in Schools, College, and HE as a leader for equality and inclusion and an employer of choice in the city for young people	*4.4.1 Ensure there is a council presence at careers and university fairs, and job markets including via virtual channels* **4.4.2 Share information about upcoming careers fair opportunities at DMTs and encourage services to physically or virtually attend and promote upcoming recruitment opportunities** 4.4.3 Deliver on the five year anti-racist schools strategy

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Brighton & Hove City Council

RACE AND DIVERSITY AT BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL: OUTCOMES OF A REVIEW 2018

Global HPO Ltd

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bhcc∕ghpo∕r&d∕May'19

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RACE AND DIVERSITY AT BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL:

OUTCOMES OF A REVIEW 2018

In 2018 Global HPO embarked upon a review of the progress of Brighton and Hove City Council's diversity and inclusion programmes, with a particular focus on racial equality. This paper reports on the outcome of that review.

BACKGROUND

Race Equality in Employment at Brighton and Hove City Council 2013

In May 2012 Global HPO (GHPO) were commissioned to undertake a review of issues affecting BME (Black and Minority Ethnic Staff) in Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) based on concerns that had been raised by the council's BME Workers Forum (BMEWF). The GHPO brief was to look at how BME staff were treated with respect to the application of people policies, procedures, processes and systems and whether they suffered greater detrimental outcomes in the application of these. More fundamentally, the brief explicitly focussed on what could and must be done to progress matters so that any issues, however challenging, could be appropriately addressed, with the council ready, willing and able to put in place mechanisms that would enable and support all staff, but in particular BME staff in Brighton & Hove.

The BMEWF in particular felt that the organisational culture inadvertently excluded BME people. The forum also thought that the lack of an effective performance management culture and practice tended to result in the proliferation of discriminatory practices. This, coupled with no agreed statement of values and behaviours across the organisation, left a vacuum that was filled by individual views and actions by some managers and staff alike.

The research report - Race Equality in Employment at Brighton and Hove City Council - concluded that BME staff were more likely to both experience HR processes more negatively and experience the more negative aspect of HR processes in that they were less likely to be appointed; more likely to employed at the lower grades; less likely to be employed at the more senior grades; more likely to experience discipline - particularly capability; more likely to be aggrieved - particularly in relation to bullying, and dismissal; and more likely than other groups, to leave within the first year of service.

GHPO concluded that the reasons for these outcomes included but went beyond unequal treatment on the grounds of race. It included, but also went beyond inconsistent approaches in equality more generally. Fundamentally the core reasons related to organisational issues such as a total lack of an organisational value/behaviour framework, poor performance management and poor leadership. With respect to equality and inclusion there were no standards set and no models to follow at BHCC.

The review report ended with a raft of recommendations for remedial action. These recommendations included addressing:

- Equalities data collection and analysis;
- Fairness in the application of HR policies and procedures - recruitment and selection, harassment and bullying, grievance and discipline etc;

- The application of equality policies and procedures - equality training and development, Equality Impact Assessments, positive action programmes to address issues of under-representation of staff at senior levels at BHCC and with respect to external recruitment; unequal outcomes for different groups with protected characteristics - i.e. LGBT and women as compared with BME and disabled staff;

- Work with the Trade unions, the staff forums especially the BMEWF and, councillors;

- Improving work with local communities; HR involvement in the then City Partnership;

- The need for a values/behaviour framework

- The Equalities Governance framework.

Race and diversity at Brighton and Hove City Council 2018

Five years later BHCC invited GHPO to revisit and review again. However, this 2018 review was triggered by the council's concerns about the slow pace of change and barriers to equality and inclusion that remained despite the council's revised approach and new action plans to achieve the recommendations set out in the 2013 review report.

The 2018 review would firstly establish a baseline by assessing the progress the council has made against the recommendations made in the 2013 report. This would involve highlighting the achievements made but also, equally importantly, identify the area(s) in which the council had either not made any progress or where progress has been limited and the contributory reasons for these differences in outcomes.

The aim of the review would be to:

- Find ways of addressing the perceived impasse that existed and to pro-actively assist in energising and reviving the programme of work that the Council had begun, enabling it to move forward so that it could deliver real and tangible outcomes for BME staff.
- Consider what the Council should continue to do, and stop doing, and how to increase the pace of change. In this regard to include a fresh perspective from internal stakeholders enabling them to feel that they are being listened to and engaged.

Methodology

The review was chiefly qualitative. We began by reviewing all relevant documentation - policies, practices and processes. We then embarked upon a series of one-to-one interviews, focus and discussion groups with the following groups of people.

One-to-one confidential interviews - in some cases 2 people attended:

- HR Leads
- Communities and Equalities Leads
- Learning and Development Leads
- Members of ELT (and where appropriate in their respective roles as diversity champions)
- TU representatives
- Leader of the Council
- Head of Communications

- Staff members who wished to contribute to the study
- Staff members with relevant case studies

Focus/discussion groups with:

- BMEWF steering group;
- BMEWF
- BME staff group
- Disabled Workers and Carers Forum
- LGB Forum
- Women's Forum
- Directorate Equalities Group (DEGS)
- Workforce Equalities Group (attended a meeting of the WEG)
- HR staff team
- General all staff steam

Approximately 120 people were engaged in this process. The results reported below are a blend of our observations and views and what we were told by the participants to the review.

OUTCOMES

Context

Our document review and first stage interviews and discussions with key individuals and groups (HR Leads, BMEWF Steering Group, Equalities Leads provided the following evidence:

There had indeed been slow progress and little improvement in race quality outcomes since the GHPO report in 2013.

This was due to a range of factors identified below. But immediately it was clear that many of the recommendations from the report had not been actioned - even those that had been highlighted as 'quick wins'. A significant factor in this outcome was the unprecedented rate of change in the leadership at BHCC over the past 5 years - both politically and in the executive. This resulted in there being no ownership/leadership of the programme, with one or two senior managers reporting during this exercise that they did not know that this programme even existed.

However, there was one very significant improvement which BHCC has to be commended for and, that is the level of expertise now present in the council with respect to equality data collection and data analysis. This is an important improvement because without data there is no way of measuring equality outcomes and testing how effectively policies, procedures and approaches are impacting the community as a whole. Our document review revealed that BHCC has attained a very sophisticated level of competence here. The comments that follow should not be seen as belittling this achievement and we strongly urge that this competence is not lost as it remains critical to underpin the overall programme.

As mentioned above, record keeping, and monitoring is essential because it paints the picture; it provides evidence for equality and inequality; it shows where things are working and where they are not. Read and analysed over time it provides trends. This information can then drive the programme - it informs as to where the changes need to be made and, on an ongoing basis it informs as to the impact of those changes. So, it is an essential element of the plan, but only one element of the plan.

Equally as important is how that data is used to drive the programme - to maintain energy, and to act on the trends that are evident. Unfortunately, this was lacking at BHCC. The result was hefty - turgid even - reporting. Reporting that was over burdened with data, blind to the trends that the data was revealing and stifling any energy to action. Data collection and analysis had become an end in itself at BHCC, rather than the means to the endgame - equality and inclusion.

For example, the data contained in annual workforce equalities reporting had shown consistently for each of the three years 2014 - 2017, that BME employees were less likely to be promoted than other protected groups and less likely to be offered the opportunity to 'act up' - an important route to permanent promotion. But this trend was not picked up for further investigation and action, even though the 2013 report had highlighted the importance of internal positive action programmes - mentoring and coaching etc - to address this issue. In fact, most of the workforce equality actions along the same three-year period at BHCC was in relation to recruitment and selection. This is not to vilify the importance of addressing inequalities in recruitment outcomes, but some good judgement and balance is necessary.

Whilst BHCC had been attracting an increasing number of BME applicants for jobs, they were still less likely than others to be successful through the various stages up to appointment. The proportion of BME staff employed at BHCC had increased very modestly over the three-year period from 2014 (5.93% of the workforce) to 2017 (6.72% of the workforce) - by 0.8%. This is within the context of a rapidly decreasing workforce overall - reduction of 11.4% FTE during the same period. Missing the trends relating to internal promotion issues for BME staff led to the neglect of important career advancement issues for this group and probably contributed to the increased frustration that we witnessed amongst BME staff during focus groups and interviews. When they said that nothing had changed, this was exactly the case. The data showed that nothing significant had changed for them, and BHCC had done nothing to address this.

THEMES

Culture

The most significant and overriding theme that we identified in this review relates to the organisational culture at BHCC. We would just note here that an equalities programme is a change programme, and essentially a cultural change programme. The challenges facing BHCC in this respect are no different to the ones facing most institutions in this country. So, the fact that fairness and inclusion are not in the DNA at BHCC is by no means a remarkable finding. However, the precise nature of this at BHCC does need to be understood and acted upon for there to be any chance of long-term change and success with respect to its diversity and inclusion programmes.

> *There is a veneer of tolerance and an impression of good overall performance on equalities*

BHCC is seen as a beacon authority amongst its peers for its performance in equalities. It has won accolades and awards over the years for its achievements, and in relation to LGBT equality, these accolades have been well deserved. Brighton has been described as the UK's 'gay capital' and is believed to have the highest proportion of same-sex households in the country. However, good performance in one aspect of diversity does not mean that there is good performance across the piece in relation to all aspects of difference. There is some misconception with respect to Brighton and Hove

that this is the case. Coupled with this is the historical notion that Brighton is a 'tolerant' city. With a history of acceptance of different - even radical - views within its community going back hundreds of years, it is clear why people might think that discrimination and exclusion don't happen there. We feel that these beliefs and notions about the city have provided a veneer that veils the truth. BME people and disabled people do not enjoy the same experiences of inclusion as other groups, and corporate and community ignorance of this fact only serves to compound the challenges here.

Attitudes to equalities

This leads on to the attitudes to equality and inclusion at BHCC that we perceived during the course of this study. This assessment was by no means scientifically undertaken, but it was apparent amongst the groups and individuals we spoke to and also relayed to us by a number of people that took part in these discussions.

We identified that these attitudes are in three layers:

- Benign neglect: by far the most prevalent viewpoint characterised by people disbelieving that the kinds of case studies and issues reported could really occur at BHCC, and that the organisation and people within it are really very tolerant, and whilst there may be some minor issues, these can be sorted. Why then the need for equalities approaches and policies?;
- Pro-active for change: again, a not insignificant cohort characterised by people believing that BHCC's successes in work around sexuality and gender identity have clouded the reality with respect to far less success with tackling other forms of inequality, and are keen to see and be involved in the change for genuine inclusion;
- Hostility: we see this very much as a minority position at BHCC. We did not encounter this directly in our fieldwork, but this was relayed to us in personal case studies, one-to-one interviews with some managers, and discussions at the BMEWF, other staff forums and with the BME staff discussion/focus group.

Going forward, we believe that it is important for BHCC to capture this by including a relevant question in the annual staff survey, and to maintain a watching brief on these attitudes. We also believe that 'proactive for change' is an important cohort that BHCC should be capitalising on to deliver the equalities change programme - we address this later in the closing paragraphs.

No Consequences

This was by far the most common response in interviews and discussion groups when the question was posed about why change had not occurred as expected at BHCC. Overwhelmingly staff believe that there is a culture of acceptance of poor behaviour - some felt that this was linked to an overly laissez faire attitude to tolerance - tolerance defined as meaning that everything is ok and there are no boundaries. Is BHCC so tolerant that it tolerates anything - where is the line drawn? This links back to our findings in 2013 when staff complained then about the lack of a values and behaviour framework and no role models.

Coupled with this is the perception that when managers do attempt to address bad behaviour through the disciplinary process, they can be thwarted by the action of some (including, in some cases, union representatives). . There was also the experience of some cases being overturned at hearings and appeals. The reasons for this maybe complex and related to the facts of individual cases but there is a perception held by some managers that there is no point in challenging offensive or abusive behaviour.

It is of course critical that the council sets unequivocal standards of behaviour and ensures that everyone understands what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour and the expectations of standards of behaviour at work. The consequence of breaches of this code will be similarly understood and transgressions dealt with - and be seen to be dealt with - appropriately. A very detailed Behaviour Framework has now been rolled out for use in performance conversations. . The Behaviour Framework sets out standards of behaviour in four areas: How we manage ourselves; How we work together; How we shape our future and; How we lead and empower. The Behaviour Framework is enshrined in BHCC's Our People Promise (see concluding paragraphs).

The culture of no consequences extends also to mandatory instructions that are ignored by staff and there are no penalties for these violations. For example, we were told of and observed during this study that instructions to attend compulsory equalities training was sometimes ignored - again with no penalties.

> ***A lack of strategic thinking in the development and implementation of equalities plans and approaches***

We saw this in operation at BHCC on numerous occasions. We observed how this worked and saw patterns that indicated to us that this was embedded into the way that BHCC handles proposals and suggestions for equalities plans - especially when these proposals may come from the BMEWF. A risk assessment of all equalities proposals and suggestions needs to be completed to ensure that these proposals do not derail the overall strategic aims in the long term. Sometimes a proposal may be made that at the time may seem to be an answer to a stubborn challenge - but if it is not rigorously risk assessed it could effectively set the plans back eons, particularly if the risk involves losing the support of key stakeholders. This is not to say that BHCC should not take challenging risks, but it needs to be very clear about the nature of the risk, alternative approaches to address the situation, and whether the outcome is worth any potential losses.

Ill conceived and poorly thought through plans can lead to inconclusive/questionable outcomes which will shatter any illusion that something was being done about the problem, leading in turn to frustrations, and can threaten to undermine the overall strategy.

Some key questions to ask when risk assessing proposals/plans are:

- How will this proposal further/positively impact the overall strategy/corporate aim?
- What outcomes do we want from this?
- What are the risks associated with doing it this way?
- Are we willing to take those risks?
- What alternatives are available?
- What will come next and how will we handle it?

The council as a community leader

Under s 149 of the Equality Act 2010 BHCC (along with all public bodies, and other bodies in relation to their work in the delivery of services on behalf of public bodies) has the following duty:

<u>The Public Sector Equality Duty</u>

''Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

▫ *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act*

▫ ***Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not***

▫ ***Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not''.***

These three points above are known as the three arms of the duty, and the last two points demonstrate clearly that local authorities (and other public bodies that they work in partnership with, such as the NHS, the police, schools etc), are not just there to deliver services, but to build cohesive communities. The local authority has a central role to play here - as a strategic planning body, not only with respect to the environment, but also in respect to communities. It follows then that in order to carry out this function, the council must know and understand about its diverse communities.

<u>Who do you think you are?</u>

We tested this in our discussion/focus group work. We posed the following questions and facilitated discussions around them

▪ Is the local authority a community leader?

▪ Does the local authority have a responsibility to help to create cohesive and peaceful communities?

▪ Does everyone in the community have a right to expect that (within the given parameters) their lives will be enriched/enhanced by the actions of their locally elected representatives and the organisation that they control?

 Many people considered the council to be a service provider and how they delivered their functions/job roles reflected that, so there was a degree of ambivalence here. However, most were engaged and interested in this viewpoint. One or two people expressed their opposition to this, and their view was that the local authority is a service provider and not a builder of communities.

There was also a lack of knowledge about the rapidly changing ethnic demography in Brighton and Hove. Those people with school aged children were more aware of this, as this age group is where this phenomenon is most pronounced. Many Brighton schools have ethnic/racial profiles similar to London schools, with children who are fluent in 3/4 languages. Knowledge about the ethnic profile of a community is important to be able to deliver services that meet all needs, but a more profound/empathetic knowledge of community is necessary to be an effective community leader. The challenge for BHCC going forward is to understand the issues here and plan effectively for the future. What sort of organisation should BHCC be developing into in relation to these important demographic changes?

The Equality Governance Framework

The governance arrangements to manage equality and inclusion at BHCC is a hierarchical structure, ranging from individual staff members through a committee/group system with the Executive

Leadership Team (ELT) overseeing and with ultimate responsibility at the top (see appendix 1). There are inter-relationships between the various committees/groups, so it is not a strictly 'top down' organism. We had discussions with all the key stakeholders in this system and attended a Workforce Equality Group (WEG) meeting and held a focus group with members of the various Directorate Equality Groups (DEGS) across the council. Our focus for this review was workforce equality and our assessment of the governance structure in that regard is that it is ineffective - both as a whole and in its component parts.

The DEGS discussion/focus group was a vibrant session with engaged and interested senior managers. The DEGS themselves however, work in silos in their individual directorates, with little sharing and learning with their counterparts in other parts of the council. They had never met as a group before our focus group meeting and commented on how useful they had found this discussion group. They had little understanding of how they fitted into the wider framework and how their work influenced the other parts of the structure and vice versa.

With respect to workforce equalities it seemed to us that the WEG should be the 'engine' of the system, where we would expect to find most of the energy driving change. Its membership is potentially very powerful - all the key stakeholders for workforce equality are represented here - the Equalities Team, the staff forums, the trade unions, HR - yet it lacked the energy needed to drive the change. The WEG operates as a council committee - relatively passively receiving reports from HR. There is questioning, but nothing very challenging and little dynamism. Data overloaded reports from HR should be constructively challenged here - trends identified and solutions offered. ELT accepts this reporting - without challenge, and it goes on. Reports overburdened with data are very difficult to read - important points are lost if the messages are not presented in a way that engages the reader. Data provides context and should be presented as appendices to underpin/provide evidence for the actions recommended under the themes/big picture story of the main report.

Who owns the Workforce Equality Strategy?

An important finding is that there is clearly an over reliance on HR as 'owners' of the strategy. It is seen as their responsibility and not as a corporate strategy - there is insufficient buy in from the council as a whole. A major shift is needed here for any future programme to have any currency.

Development support for staff forums

In the 2013 report we highlighted the need for development/support for some of the staff forums. We make that recommendation again here. In order for them to operate more effectively a keener understanding of the political nuances at BHCC is needed and how they can navigate their way through this to achieve the outcomes that they want - synchronizing their efforts accordingly with their partners. They just need to work a bit smarter and need some investment in their development to enable this.

Equalities Learning and Development (L&D)

As is the case with most local authorities, BHCC is facing a great challenge with respect to funding the learning and development (L&D) interventions that are essential to keep the council competent. There is no doubt that L&D at BHCC is under resourced generally and of course this is also the case with training around equality and inclusion. Equalities training at BHCC is mandatory - but as mentioned above there are no sanctions for teams or individuals that do not undergo the training. Very little training is delivered in the traditional classroom group setting - as this is very expensive, currently the

council are able to offer equalities classroom group training for up to about 70 people per year. Most of the training is delivered via web based online interventions.

We looked at the online training. We found the quality to be of a very basic standard, the content was out of date - so out of date in one instance that the information provided was wrong. The technology did not enable a seamless effortless journey - it was frustratingly difficult to navigate.

Unconscious Bias Training

At the time of this review, a large number of council staff had recently undergone unconscious bias training. This is an important equalities L&D intervention, and we were keen to understand how this was delivered and how it was received. It was delivered via a combination of online training followed up by team-based group sessions delivered by the team manager who followed a script/aid memoire that had been developed to coach the manager in how to deliver the training.

Most people that we spoke to during the interviews and focus groups had undergone this training. The reception was mixed. Some people reported a very positive experience, others far less positive. We believe there were a number of reasons for this outcome.

- Unconscious bias training is potentially the most challenging in the range of equalities L&D interventions and requires the skills of a confident and competent equalities trainer. It was very risky to roll this out without the requisite skills in house to deliver it. Most managers will not be ''confident and competent equalities trainers''. But clearly those managers who were interested and engaged in the subject, who studied the script and who were confident in their delivery were able to deliver a pretty proficient job. Others were not.

- With the likes of unconscious bias training - it is far easier to engage people who are receptive to the message. It's a much greater challenge to make an impact on those who are antagonistic or unreceptive to the subject. Here is where the skills of a competent trainer are required.

- But there is one issue that threatens to undermine anything gained from the unconscious bias exercise and that is that there has been no follow through. Raising awareness of unconscious bias is just the beginning of a journey through equalities learning and development. The next stage to this is learning how to manage the expression of bias. The question to be answered is ''now that I understand and am aware of my biases and how they can affect my behaviour - what do I do about it?, how do I manage it?'' The answer is missing at BHCC, and during our discussion groups one or two people who had enjoyed their unconscious bias training asked that very question - ''what now? - what do I do with this?''

We looked at the online training and the script for the trainers. Our view is that whilst the content could have been more sophisticated and the video more up to date - the most important learning points about unconscious bias itself were covered.

L&D outcomes and further challenges

We were told that the impact of equalities training on behaviour change at BHCC is minimal. That is the money spent on the current approaches is giving no return - a false economy, therefore. The great challenge for BHCC going forward is to develop approaches for equalities L&D that really do deliver value for money - that is affordable for the council but also crucially, that is effective. In order to do this BHCC first needs to be clear on exactly what they need their equalities learning to deliver and find

the most cost-effective means of executing this. There are many avenues to learning, these need to be examined and the most relevant models exploited at a cost that is affordable.

Communications

It appeared to us that Communications at BHCC seemed not to have engaged with workforce equality issues at all. The Comms team seemed to be unaware of BHCC's equalities work in regard to their workforce. Consequently, the existing programme did not have a communications strategy built in. This has to be remedied going forward, with the Communications Team at BHCC involved in the development of approaches so that they are able to use their expertise to advise on and use, the most appropriate methods (using all media- social and otherwise) to promulgate the council's messages internally and externally.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The brief to GHPO for the conclusion of the project was as follows:

''Outcome of the review

To provide the council with a report detailing the findings from the review and identifying what specific realistic actions the council needs to take to deliver real and tangible positive outcomes for the BME workforce. A key element of the report will be a prioritised programme action with a detailed rationale and recommended timescales''.

This is a pretty standard brief for reviews such as this. But we had been here before at BHCC, and we did the same thing then, and much of what we said then we are repeating again now. So, we need a different approach. In designing this we considered the following:

- The council as a corporate body - for a variety of reasons - had never 'owned' the strategy. It had been seen as an HR issue and the rest of the council had paid scant regard to it. This had to be remedied.
- Political instabilities in the leadership of the council over the years had resulted in insecurities amongst staff and especially senior staff about committing to long term strategies and plans, and for this programme, a lack of direction, steer and drive. There is little to be done about political change, but we felt that one way of mitigating the fallout from this is to ensure that long standing members of staff - who 'hold the organisational culture' regardless of change around them - are engaged and commit to this approach and develop a sense of ownership and pride in being a genuinely inclusive and just organisation where everyone is valued.
- On our travels during this review we were told - 'you'll be back in five years'. The inference being that nothing will change and in five years we will be invited back to do the same thing over again. To ensure that this did not happen we needed a different approach.

Co-creation

The council were using the model of co- creation to develop Our People Promise. Our People Promise is an ongoing programme of work to improve the BHCC employer offer and is now the BHCC employer brand. It is based on five key commitments to staff and provides a structure for communicating the changes that BHCC are making. Its development has been underpinned by co-creation - with staff and

other stakeholders to ensure that it is a meaningful and sustainable program - co creation with staff is seen as vital to its success.

The action plan from this review fits perfectly into Our People Promise - under the Promise *"We Promise that we will be a Fair and Inclusive place to work"* - and the model of co-creation we feel will go a long way to addressing the challenges listed above. So, the solution to the issues identified in this review does not lie with GHPO to develop but with BHCC in the co-creation process. BHCC will design and deliver the solutions and be seen to do so.

In assisting BHCC with this process GHPO have facilitated a series of workshops with the key stakeholders, and leaders and influencers throughout the council to begin the process of remedy. At these workshops GHPO have presented the outcomes of the review and responded to questions. Workshop participants have then designed the solutions in smaller group settings led by BHCC senior managers and other key staff. The resulting action plan that you will have read at the beginning of this report is a synthesis of these workshop outcomes. GHPO remains committed to support BHCC through this process of organisational change.

App.1

Brighton & Hove City Council
Equalities Structure

Workers' Forums

(for Black & Minority Ethnic staff, Disabled staff and Carers, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans staff, and Women.)

Forums meet quarterly for members to share experiences and provide mutual support. Forum members attend the WEG, ESG and DEGs to have a collective voice in developing policy, procedures and service delivery.

Communities, Equality and Third Sector

Provide support, training and advice across the council on EIAs, equality monitoring, legal compliance, and best practice. Co-ordinate and administer ESG, support Directorate Equality Groups, facilitate links between groups and share corporate issues.

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Leads for equality work, specifically Larissa Reed for overall progress and Dave Kuenssberg for workforce equality. Receive regular reports on progress.

Workforce Equality Group (WEG)

Ensure equality and diversity across all workforce issues. Oversee implementation of Workforce Equality Action Plan.

Equality Steering Group (ESG)

Ensure council services embed equalities in their all aspects of their work. Ensure progress against EIA timetable and E&I Strategy.

Directorate Equalities Groups (DEGs) – including representatives from TUs

Provide quality assurance for equalities work in directorates.

| Staff issues report / refer to WEG | Service provision issues report / refer to ESG |

Directorate Management Teams (DMT)

DMT to ensure EIAs and corporate equality objectives are embedded into directorate and service business plans.

bhcc/ghpo/r&d/May'19

⇕

Council Teams
Teams include equality and inclusion issues as part of team meeting discussions, service improvement, Team Plans and Equality Impact Assessments.

⇕

Individual Staff
Performance & Development Planning includes equalities targets. Learning and development identifies equalities needs.