

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Workforce Equalities Action Plan</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>11 July 2013</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Finance &amp; Resources</b>		
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

### **1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1. The council's overall approach to equalities is set out in its Equalities & Inclusion Policy 2012-15, which was approved by Full Council.
- 1.2. The council's Corporate Plan commitments for 2013/14 included the implementation of a Workforce Equalities Action Plan, as part of our Modernising the Council priority. We need a workforce that better reflects the city's economically active community profile. We have an Excellent rating in the Equality Standard for Local Government, which we value, but we are not complacent and need to live up to the high standards that our staff and citizens expect of us as an employer.
- 1.3. The council commissioned consultants Global HPO to undertake an assessment of race equality in employment at Brighton & Hove City Council. The findings of that report and the recommendations are a core part of this action plan. While the findings identified specific issues in relation to race equality, many were relevant to all equalities strands and indeed to broader performance and cultural issues across the organisation. Where relevant, actions from other equalities work such as the Trans Scrutiny Equality Panel have also been incorporated into this plan.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the findings of the Global HPO report on race equality in employment at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the progress made to date on the issues identified in that report as set out in paragraph 3.3.
- 2.3 That the Committee approves the Workforce Equalities Action plans set out in Appendix 2 and 3.

2.4 That the Committee notes the ongoing monitoring and reporting arrangements set out in Appendix 4.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS**

3.1 The council's Equalities and Inclusion Policy 2012-2015 describes our vision, objectives, key actions and measures to promote, facilitate and deliver equality both within Brighton and Hove City Council and the rest of the city. The Policy fits within corporate, community and partner service frameworks and sets out key city issues and their impacts on protected equality and key social inclusion groups. The Policy's objectives also meet our requirements under the public sector duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Workforce Equalities Action Plan is intended to provide more detail on how the council will improve equality in employment, within the overarching remit of the Equalities & Inclusion Policy.

3.2 During the spring of 2012, the former Chief Executive and former Leader requested that an independent audit review of race equality in employment be commissioned following concerns that had been raised with them by the Black and Minority Ethnic Workers Forum (BMEWF). Global HPO (GHPO) was appointed and the then Director of Finance was asked to Chair a steering group which also comprised members of the BMEWF to oversee the work. The scope and timetable of the review by GHPO was agreed by the steering group. More detail on the methodology is included in the introduction to the report which can be read in full at Appendix 1.

3.3 Over the course of the review, working relationships between senior council officers, the BMEWF steering group members, Human Resources and the Communities and Equalities team were significantly strengthened, partly due to the facilitating role that GHPO played. As a result, action has not waited until the completion of the report and although there is much still to be done a great deal of positive progress has already been made. The work has been integrated into the council's Modernisation agenda, as set out in its corporate plan and linked to wider issues of management, leadership and organisational development across the organisation. Examples include:

- Introducing an agreed set of values across the organisation which have been incorporated into the council's constitution, codes of conduct and performance management framework;
- Revising the personal development plan (appraisal) documentation and approach, to place greater emphasis on values and behaviours;
- Reviewing and agreeing new terms of reference for the workers forums, including the support and training provided to ensure that they are effective and more joint working across the forums;
- Building on the success of the LGBT workers mentoring scheme - the launch of the diversity monitoring scheme that covers LGBT, BME, Disabled and women employees.

- Relaunching the HR equalities group (subsequently renamed the Workforce Equalities Group (WEG)) with representation from the workers forums and trades unions;
  - Establishing joint training with WEG members, the first of these being focussed on understanding data and analysis,
  - Nominating an Equalities Champion on the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
  - Reviewing the Dignity at Work Policy;
  - Revising the equalities monitoring forms;
  - Improving internal communications.
- 3.4 There is a commitment in the Corporate Plan to develop a Workforce Equalities Action Plan, which was informed by the findings in the GHPO report. The first task was to list the full set of recommendations and to consider prioritisation. This was done by consulting the steering group, representatives of the workers forums, HR teams and the Communities and Equality team. Resourcing and sequential actions also needed to be taken in to account. For example, it is only possible to conduct some of the data analysis needed once more of the data has been collected. This process of prioritisation and planning resulted in the action plans given as appendix 2 and 3.
- 3.5 Appendix 2 is a high level organisational development document that indicates where the council wants and needs to be on workforce equalities in three years time. It is an indication of aspirations. As explained in 3.4, it is not possible to action all of the recommendations in year one but it is important to set the direction at this stage.
- 3.6 Appendix 3 is a more detailed plan of action for year one. This details the many actions that must take place during this calendar year. It lists accountable officers and officers responsible for implementation.
- 3.7 It is important to note that there are significant other areas of equalities activity underway within the council. These include:
- Corporate Plan commitments
  - Equality and Inclusion Action Plan
  - Trans Scrutiny Recommendations
  - Disability Scrutiny Recommendations
  - Stonewall Workplace Equality index assessment
  - BME needs assessment

As well as individual work by service areas, through the completion of equality impact assessments and subsequent action and business plans, each directorate has re-established a directorate equality group to champion, performance manage and quality assure equalities work within their area. These are supported corporately by the Communities and Equality Team.

All of the above will continue to be taken into consideration when formulating details for year two and three of the Workforce Equality Action Plan.

#### **4. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 There was extensive engagement and consultation in the preparation of the GHPO report and in other activities such as the Trans Equality Scrutiny Panel.
- 4.2 Workers Forums and Trades Union colleagues have been involved via their membership on the WEG, which has discussed the emerging action plan twice. Workers forums steering groups were invited to participate in the prioritisation activity as were key HR teams. Other HR colleagues were involved in looking at priorities for the HR business plan. The Communities and Equality team have been involved via its membership of the WEG.
- 4.3 The council's Equalities Steering Group has discussed the report and its findings.
- 4.4 One of the actions is around the reinvigoration of community engagement activity for HR, linking with the joint work the Community Safety and Communities and Equality teams are undertaking with BME organisations on producing a BME needs assessment for the city.

#### **5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION / FUTURE GOVERNANCE**

- 5.1 Governance arrangements were agreed for the development of the action plan and future arrangements are detailed in appendix 4. This sees the Workforce Equalities Action Plan project board meeting quarterly to oversee the action plan implementation. An annual update will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee incorporating the next year's action plan.

#### **6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The costs of engaging Global HPO over a period of approximately 12 months have been £64,000. The scope of the work undertaken for this fee is included in the report itself. It included a review of the council's policies and procedures, reviewing 99 case files and interviewing over 130 people. Global HPO, as part of this work, also attended steering group meetings approximately 6 weekly over that time period and provided training on analysing and interpreting management information to staff in HR and the BME Workers Forum.

The Workforce Equalities Action Plan (WEAP) is expected to be implemented by in-house staff and be absorbed into existing workloads. Funding for the recruitment of the Management Information Officer noted in the action plan has been agreed and identified, and other costs noted such as an independent review of the perception of BHCC by communities and

externally-provided training that may be required will need to be met from within existing budgets.

Officer consulted: Rob Allen 20 June 2013

Legal Implications:

- 6.2 The Action Plans set out in Appendix 2 and 3 are consistent with the council's public sector equality duty as specified in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

Officer consulted Oliver Dixon 20 June 2013

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 This report is a core response to the council ensuring it meets its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in regards to its workforce as well as its relevant corporate plan commitments.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 The aims of the Workforce Equalities Action Plan are closely supported by the aims of the council's One Planet Sustainability Action Plan (SAP). The SAP section on Equality & Local Economy covers the specific issues of equality at work, within and outside the directly employed workforce, and the 'Health and Happiness' section reflects the themes of the values and behaviours the council as an employer expects – including dignity and respect.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

- 6.5 The council's reputation as an employer that reflects the diversity of the city and promotes equality in employment supports broader community cohesion objectives.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

- 6.6 Risk sessions were held in both a steering group meeting and with a special meeting of the Workforce Equalities Group. These have been captured in a risk register which thoroughly addresses those risks that might affect the successful implementation of the plans in appendix 2 and 3. This register will be monitored by the project board and will also be discussed regularly by the Workforce Equalities Group. This register also provides information around mitigating actions to reduce the risk.

Risks identified include the need to prioritise the work effectively due to resource and capacity constraints, dependencies with other culture change aspects of the council's Modernisation programme and the impact on the council's reputation of not making demonstrable progress in this area.

Any increase in risk will be reported to the accountable officers or escalated to the project board / senior managers as appropriate.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 6.7 This action plan is a key corporate plan commitment and will have city wide implications in terms of how communities view the council as an employer and more general in its democratic community leadership role.

Public Health Implications

- 6.8 None identified.

**7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 Option One: do nothing.

This would potentially result in unequal access to employment at BHCC. It could lead to continued under representation of BME staff in employment and an over representation of staff with protected characteristics in certain HR processes. There is a commitment in the Corporate Plan to develop the Workforce Equalities Action Plan.

- 7.2 Option Two: provide temporary resources to provide quick wins. These are not sustainable and will not result in longer term changes for staff and potential applicants.

- 7.3 Option Three: to have the Workforce Equalities Action Plan as set out in the appendices.

**8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Option three as described above helps create a sustainable culture change resulting in a positive outcome for staff and potential applicants.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

- Appendix 1: Global HPO Report (available in Member's rooms and online)  
Appendix 2: Action Plan 2013 – 2016 High level three year overview  
Appendix 3: Action Plan 2013 -2014 Year one detail  
Appendix 4: Ongoing governance and monitoring framework