

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Working Towards a Fair and Inclusive Workplace</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Finance &amp; Resources</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Alison Mcmanamon</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 290511</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>alison.mcmanamon@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>(All Wards);</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove is a vibrant city that is culturally, economically and socially diverse. The council values this diversity and aims to support and encourage it. We also take a leading role in seeking to increase equality, inclusion and fairness in the city. Increasing equality is a central principle informing how we plan, finance, deliver, commission and review our services. Critical to this is being a fair and inclusive employer with a workforce that knows and understands the city's population and is representative of the people it serves.
- 1.2 Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitment is set out in the council's Equality and Inclusion Policy; our EDI approach, work and activity is externally assessed through our participation in the LGA peer assessment Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) as well as everyday by the feedback from customers and councillors and through engagement with communities. In addition to this the council commissions external challenge on specific EDI issues. In 2013 the council commissioned consultancy firm Global HPO to assess race equality in the council as an employer. In 2018 we asked them back to assess how far we had improved and to make recommendations for improvement.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the findings from the Global HPO (GHPO) review 2018 and to update the Committee on the collaborative development of the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan (see **Appendix 1**). The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan has been developed as a full and holistic approach covering workforce, customers and communities, and aligned to delivering the Equality & Inclusion Strategy and in readiness for a future EFLG assessment. Significantly, the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan includes a programme of work to develop and support a representative, engaged and skilled workforce that is accountable for its behaviour towards each other and the council's service users. It also recognises the interlink between our actions and behaviour as an employer and the influence and impacts on our relationship and trust with communities and ability to serve our diverse customer base.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee (P&R):
- 2.2 Notes the findings in the Global HPO report and endorses the co-created Fair & Inclusive Action Plan to support the council's aim to establish a fair and inclusive culture where expectations around how we work are clear and consistently met;
- 2.3 Commits to supporting and championing the aims and actions of the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan;
- 2.4 Instructs officers to bring a progress report in 12 months as part of the governance of the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan.

## 3 CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Where the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan came from

- 3.1 In 2018 the council commissioned external consultants, Global HPO (GHPO), to carry out a follow-up review of race equality and inclusion at the council. This was to check and follow up on progress since their 2013 report.
- 3.2 The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan (FIAP) has been co-created to address a number of issues identified by GHPO in their review. It was developed over a number of interviews and workshops with key stakeholders across the organisation as well as issues identified through our 2019 staff survey and other workforce data. The key issues were:
  - Our workforce equalities profile is still not fully reflective of the community we serve, and whilst some improvements had been made, these had been slow and not kept pace with the changing make-up of our community; (for example 6.86% of staff were from a BME background against a target of 9.1% taken from the 2011 census (see **Appendix 2**);
  - BME staff continue to experience internal promotion and career advancement issues (see **Appendix 3**);
  - Concern that our policies and procedures are not applied consistently and there is adverse impact for some groups of staff;
  - A need to review the governance of equalities to ensure that workforce and service equalities issues are overseen in a coherent way;
  - That workforce equality and inclusion has not become embedded within the council as there is over-reliance on HR as 'owners' of the strategy.
- 3.3 The council's need to create a fair and inclusive working environment is important to ensure that:
  - the experience of all staff is positive and they are supported to be at their best;

- no staff are discriminated against or fare less successfully because of a protected characteristic;
  - we recruit and retain a diverse workforce to ensure the council understands and can enable local communities effectively by providing inclusive and accessible services.
- 3.4 Research demonstrates there are many benefits of a diverse workforce: not only does it provide the potential to understand, engage and better serve the city's diverse population but it can increase creativity and innovation, improve employee engagement and retention, and enhance the organisation's reputation<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.5 The GHPO review acknowledged the important role that our trade unions play in the future of the organisation, but also that the need to improve relationships was recognised by all. The development of the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan through co-creation is key to this. We are working jointly with our trade unions on many shared aims such as increasing the informal resolution of disputes through early intervention and working with local representatives to support with communication of the Fair and Inclusive Action Plan.

#### Approach

- 3.6 A key under-pinning for this work has been its co-creation theme - with staff and other stakeholders to ensure we are creating something sustainable and meaningful, rather than a 'top down' programme that staff may struggle to buy into. Stakeholders here include representatives from both trade unions and the Workers Forums, officers from the front-line and 'back office', managers, and representatives from the HR, communities and equalities, communications and public health teams.

#### Measuring success

- 3.7 The activities that underpin the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan will be measured against a series of indicators which show how our employment offer and the experience of staff is improving. These measures include indicators from our staff survey results 2019, including the new Fair & Inclusive Index, formal casework, recruitment data, etc. (See **Appendix 4**).
- 3.8 Our 2019 Staff Survey shows improvement in staff satisfaction and engagement, which continues a trend of improvement since 2015. However, these results are not consistent across all staff groups (see **Appendix 5**). For example:
- The Fair and Inclusive Index, which has an organisational benchmark of 78%, compared with 74% for BME staff.
- 3.9 The diversity profile of the organisation continues to improve slowly (see **Appendix 2**), but much more slowly than is desirable. We have seen improvements in the number of applicants from some under-represented groups but there continues to be an issue in converting this to hires.

#### Key activities to build on

- 3.10 Global HPO identified a number of actions that are required to create the right foundation to support implementation and monitoring of the work streams. These include:

**Governance Framework** – coherent governance of workforce and service equalities (See **Appendix 6**).

**Leadership Network** – ensuring accountability of lead officers in driving and implementing equalities, diversity and inclusion and ensuring this is measured through the performance management framework.

**Behaviour Framework** – the dissemination and use of a refreshed behaviour framework so that all staff are clear on expectations of behaviour and accountable for their behaviour.

**Data Analysis** – ensuring the council continues to collect and report the robust equalities data it has developed but it must use the data effectively to inform interventions.

- 3.11 **Appendix 1** has more detail of the full work programme.

## **4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan is supported by modernisation funding (see financial implications), HR resources, Communities and Equalities team staff and support from other teams across the council. The possibility of engaging external support was considered, but this option would be more costly and less sustainable. In addition, our commitment to co-creation with staff is seen as vital to its success and GHPO note that this exercise must not be seen to be HR led but is the responsibility of all officers within the organisation as well as Members to ensure this is embedded within the organisation. The Fair & Inclusive Action plan is an organisational culture change programme that will iterate over time in response to new challenges and is expected to take four to five years to embed.
- 4.2 The option of not addressing the issues of equality, diversity and inclusion as identified in **Section 3**, would have a detrimental impact on staff, particularly BME staff, on the council's reputation in the city and more widely and on the capability of the organisation to provide inclusive and accessible services.
- 4.3 It is therefore concluded that this work should be progressed with existing resources, supplemented as necessary with regard to specific projects by one-off modernisation funding. Any additional funding is subject to a business case and ongoing governance by the Corporate Modernisation Delivery Board and Members Modernisation Oversight Group.

## **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Engagement has taken place with our recognised trade unions, a range of staff via focus groups, our workers forums and the council's leadership teams. The GHPO review included face to face workshops or interviews with over 100 staff.

- 5.2 The GHPO findings were presented at a number of facilitated workshops across the organisation to around 250 stakeholders. This included staff from the workers' forums, trade unions, Leadership Network, HROD, Legal Services, Communities, Equality & Third Sector, Performance Improvement and Communications teams, and wider staff groups. Outcomes from the workshops were used to co-create and prioritise the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan.
- 5.3 The process of co-creation with staff is continuing, and recently a workshop was held with members of the BMEWF and other interested staff to develop ideas for the forthcoming campaign 'we need to talk about race'. This collaborative approach of working with groups of interested colleagues will continue, including ensuring we engage with staff from all areas of the organisation.
- 5.4 The Fair and Inclusive Action Plan includes a community engagement work stream (see **Appendix 1**). Further work is planned with communities to promote the council as an employer of choice and increase the diversity of the council's workforce profile. This work stream also covers work with services across the council to ensure that differences in access or outcomes for service users – related to their legally protected characteristics – are understood and addressed.

## 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan will help ensure equality is at the heart of how the council operates: its decision-making, business planning, service delivery and as an employer and civic leader. It will help ensure we have a fairer and more inclusive workplace, increase the engagement and morale of staff, and address issues of discrimination that exist in the organisation. It will also support an approach where we work together to ensure staff from all ethnic backgrounds and sections of the community feel able to thrive as valued employees of the Council.
- 6.2 We remain committed to working with the BME Workers' Forum, other Workers' Forums and Trade Unions to achieve this.

## 7 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 During 2019/20 the development of the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan is being supported by up to c.£100k Our People Promise (OPP) modernisation funding within the available £0.2m OPP funding envelope approved by full Council in February 2019. The business case will identify the performance measures and indicators by which success will be monitored. There are no other financial implications arising from this work which will be supported from existing resources across the organisation.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell*

*Date: 16/08/19*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Council is under a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination (the Public Sector Equality Duty). The implementation of

the Fair & Inclusive Action Plan would be evidence of the Council's compliance with that duty.

*Lawyer Consulted: Carol Haynes*

*Date: 23/09/19*

Equalities Implications:

- 3.1 As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council must seek 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; and
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.3 The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan is designed to increasing equality, opportunities and fairness inside our organisation, within our services and in the city, and to eliminate discrimination.
- 7.5 The council has a role as civic leader, with legal duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. All communities in the city need to be confident that their voices are represented, know that services meet their needs fairly, and feel that the council is an employer of choice.
- 7.6 Where staff have a better understanding of the needs and assets of diverse communities (from their own experience and through learning and development) they provide better services: in more appropriate, accessible and inclusive ways. They are also more likely to get it right first time.
- 7.7 Staff of diverse backgrounds and experiences bring diverse perspectives and strengths. At a time of significant change and financial pressure for the council this is a vital asset that promotes creativity and innovation contributing to ensuring we are a modern council.
- 7.8 All staff must be confident that they can be themselves at work and feel valued and a sense of belonging, supported by an inclusive culture that identifies and removes barriers and creates opportunities and career development and progression.
- 7.9 The Fair & Inclusive Action Plan will support all these aims and bring benefits to council employees as well as to the reputation of, and trust and confidence in the council across the city.

*Sarah Tighe-Ford*

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.10 None identified

<sup>1</sup><https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/other/the-business-case-for-equality-and-diversity>

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

- 1 Fair and Inclusive Action Plan & GHPO report
- 2 Workforce equality profile (OPD March 2019)
- 3 Recruitment and development data by ethnicity
- 4 FIAP benefits table
- 5 Staff survey results – equalities benchmarking
- 6 Equality Governance Framework and CEDG Terms of Reference

