

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

9 July 2020

Agenda Item 17(b)(1)

Brighton & Hove City Council



Cllr Hannah Clare
Green Group Member for Brunswick & Adelaide Ward
C/o Hove Town Hall
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Dear Geoff

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 9th July 2020.

I am sure all on this committee agree that this council could do a lot to become more representative and inclusive to ensure people from different communities can take part. Indeed, announcements were made by the administration earlier this month which commit to a civic leadership programme for people from underrepresented communities.

This is welcome; however, I do also feel that this council can go further. To truly solve the problem, I think we need to get to the root of it and work to make the council a better place to be part of.

In December last year, this committee received an update on the Women in Local Government report, with a list of actions that would be taken. Some of these still appear to be outstanding, including a survey of meeting times which was committed under point 9 of the appendix to the 5 December Policy & Resources report. This was also requested by Whips to be sent to political parties also, so that potential candidates can contribute and we are able to include people who may not take part due to current restrictions.

Other actions taken, were not fully engaged with by all councillors. Point 10 of the same report committed to equalities training but I was frustrated by the low attendance at the this and noted that most of the participants were women. In the trans awareness training requested in the former NICE committee, there was only one member attending from each of the Conservative Group and Labour Groups. We must do better in engaging with this training if it is to be effective.

Further, when the report was heard at TECC, a green amendment was passed to ask "*That the committee requests officers to promote all roles, including senior roles, available for flexible working and part-time*". We have seen examples of where this has not occurred in job roles. For example, a recent advert for the

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Environmental Enforcement officer role said, *"The role is full-time (37 hours per week) and permanent."*

Things have also changed since the Women in Local Government report – notably that the pandemic has bought more possibilities for and forced us into a situation of flexible and remote working. This flexibility can be crucial in allowing more people to fit council work around their other responsibilities. The changes we have had recently may present an opportunity to review how this may work for councillors in the longer term.

I would therefore like to ask for the following:

- An update on what actions have been taken and which are still outstanding since December 2019's Women in Local Government report to a future meeting of this committee
- A commitment to future monitoring of this report and the actions contained within the report and amendments at committee
- More detail on the planned civic leadership programme and a commitment that there will be an opportunity for all groups to engage in this process
- A review of what flexibility we can retain when "back to normal" to support a more inclusive council

Yours sincerely

Cllr Hannah Clare
Brunswick and Adelaide Ward