

Report for: Staffing & Remuneration Committee 14th December 2015

Item number: 15

Title: Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan

Report authorised by : Jacquie McGeachie, Assistant Director Human Resources

Lead Officer: Julie Amory, HR Policy Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 At the 14th September 2015 meeting of this Committee a presentation was given on the initial findings of the review conducted by an external organisation into the council's equality practices and its overall compliance with the Equality Act and Public Sector Duty.
- 1.2 The Committee resolved:
- a) That the Committee agree to receive a final Action Plan and actions at the December 2015 committee meeting;
 - b) That the Committee agree to monitor progress during 2016.
- 1.3 A copy of the final report received from ENEI is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable

3. Recommendations

That the proposed draft action plan attached at Appendix 2 be noted. The Committee is also asked to note that the recommendations and draft action plan will also be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 17th December 2015.

4. Reason for decision

It was agreed at the 14th September 2015 meeting of this Committee that the full report and recommended actions would come back to this group for consideration and agreement.

5. Alternative options considered

As the Council is committed to improving its equality practices there are no alternatives to consider as this report will be used as the starting point for making changes in the workplace culture and Equality Act compliance.

6. Background information

- 6.1. Following a competitive tendering exercise Human Resources commissioned ENEI to complete the review. ENEI is an independent organisation that covers all aspects of equality and inclusion issues in the workplace; working with Government, business and trade unions.
- 6.2 The commissioned review had six main objectives:
1. Seeking views of stakeholders and employees;
 2. Evaluating Learning & Development products;
 3. Evaluating current EqlAs including content quality;
 4. Audit EqlA procedure and documentation;
 5. Audit how we perform in relation to the Public Sector Duty and Equalities Act;
 6. Consider how equality & diversity can impact on culture.
- 6.3 The final report contains numerous recommendations which have been grouped into themes to assist in the action planning progress. Grouping the areas will also assist in implementation, effective monitoring and will ensure that the correct area is aware of and responsible for the relevant action. An order of priority has been allocated to each recommendation although these are subject to the final agreement by the project group set up to implement them, they are based on early impact and compliance.
- 6.4 The common themes used to collate the recommendations are:
1. Cumulative Analysis techniques and data;
 2. Equality Impact Assessments – process and support;
 3. Procurement processes and Contracted Out Services;
 4. Quality Improvement activities;
 5. Monitoring of progress and performance;
 6. Induction and development;
 7. Recruitment and retention.
- 6.5 As agreed by Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on 1st September 2015 the implementation of the recommendations at Appendix 2 of this report will be jointly owned by a project group made up of HR, and a cross council team led by the Head of Policy & Business Management and the Director for Public Health (as the cross cutting theme owner for 'A fair and equal borough'). The first actions for the group will be to review the priority order given in Appendix 2 to ensure that they are realistic and can be met from within the resources allocated. Making a decision on how the the recommendations will be implemented will also be an early action for the group to decide.
- 6.6 Implementation of the recommendations will be met within existing resources where possible with sub-groups that will include employees from HR, Policy Team, Trade Union representatives and members of staff who have volunteered to assist in the implementation process. The next stage will be for the recommendations to be allocated to business areas for work to begin on implementation. The focus will be on implementing those recommendations identified as Year 1 priorities.
- 6.7 We will be performing an organised communication to staff of the findings that details planned activity including running sessions with Corporate Leadership Group (CLG) and Corporate Management Group (CMG) early in 2016.
- 6.8 The review identified a need to have data across all the equality strands which will assist in considering potential impact of our decisions on the nine Protected Equality Strands when completing Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs). The council

recognises that there is a gap in some of our data sources which it is committed to addressing as part of the implementation of the recommended actions.

- 6.9 The Policy and Strategy Unit will create guidance notes that will inform employees who are completing EqlAs of other data sources that they can use when completing an assessment that have been compiled by external organisations for example, the GLA, London Councils and other government departments.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious agenda, and one that will require significant change to deliver. The equalities review is the key element of the Inclusion & Equality Workforce Objectives for 2015 – 18 which forms part of the Corporate Plan, the Mid Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Plan.
- 7.2 A key priority of the Council's Corporate Plan is to be Outstanding for All. To assist in achieving this aim it is important for the Council to have in place initiatives that work towards this objective.
- 7.3 It is encouraging to note that many of the recommendations suggested at Appendix 2 of this report and initiatives already included within HR's Workforce Plan will assist in meeting this aim as they include:
- a. offering increased access to work experience for young BAME people via our apprenticeship programme;
 - b. setting objectives for managers around ensuring diversity and inclusion of their teams;
 - c. using FUSE to review succession planning for diverse talent; and
 - d. encouraging and delivering mentoring for employees in particular those from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background as the Council recognises the gaps in progression levels of this part of its workforce.
- 7.4 The equality review recommendations and current HR Workforce Plan initiatives are consistent with the action that the CIPD - the professional body for HR and people development – recently suggested that employers take to assist BAME workers as they had identified that BAME employees were less likely to be rated as top performers than their white counterparts.

8. Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities

Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

- 8.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report and sees no legal reasons preventing the Committee from approving the recommendations.

The Chief Finance Officer

- 8.2 The Chief Finance Officer confirms that whilst the recommendations in Appendix 2 could require expenditure and other resource if they are agreed, no full assessment of costs has yet been made. This will emerge from the next planned stage which is a project group who will review the recommendations in detail and address, where resources are required, if they can be met and from where.

Equalities and Community Cohension Comments

- 8.3 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- a. tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under section 4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age,

- disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- b. advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- c. foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.4 The commissioned review focussed on assessing the Council's performance against the public sector equality duty and made recommendations for improvement. Implementation of recommendations identified during the review will assist the Council meet its duties under the Equality Act and will also indirectly benefit our residents and service users as our staff become better equipped to assist individuals from equality backgrounds different from their own.

9. Use of Appendices

- Appendix 1 ENEI Equality Audit Report
- Appendix 2 Draft Equality Audit Mapped Recommendations

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1. N/A