

EMPLOYMENT AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 14 December 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Sultan (Chair); Councillors Shakil Ahmed, Faisal, James Gartside and Wazir

OFFICERS: R. Barker (Assistant Director for Workforce and Organisational Development), M. Garraway (Head of Governance)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: S. Arfan (HMRCCG)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Martin, Councillor Rush, Councillor Sullivan and Councillor West

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 EMPLOYMENT AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate / Assistant Director (Legal, Governance and Workforce) detailing the terms of reference for the Committee as agreed by Council.

Members of the Committee confirmed the terms of reference to be fit for purpose, providing a clear platform for further development of the work programme for the remainder of this municipal year and into the next.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

3 EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director for Workforce and Organisational Development detailing the details of the composition organisation workforce and ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty for the financial year ending on 31st March 2021.

It was reported that Rochdale Borough Council was seeking to ensure the composition of its workforce reflects the diverse local community, and to offer equality of opportunity in employment. The Council was compliant with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish equality information of the workforce and this report illustrates our progress.

Members of the Committee sought clarification that the Council was utilising all opportunities through community channels to address the disparities. Given jobs were available more needed to be done to get BAME people applying for roles.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the Skills and Workforce team attend a future meeting of the Committee to detail the communication plan for promoting opportunities within the Council to potential BAME candidates.

4 GENDER PAY GAP

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Development detailing the gender pay gap within the Council.

Rochdale Borough Council as a public authority is required under the Equality Act Regulations of 2017 to publish gender pay gap information relating to its employees by 30th March each year. For 2021 the date was changed to 5 October due to the continuing impact of COVID-19.

The report highlighted the difference in both the mean and median pay of full pay male and female employees expressed as a percentage; as well as the proportion of males and females employed in four quartile pay bands ranging from lower to upper as well as any differences in bonus pay.

It was reported that the gender pay gap data compared to previous years continued to improve, with the mean difference in pay between males and females improving from female pay being 1.58% less than male pay from last year to female mean pay being 1.42% higher than male mean pay this year. The median pay had also improved with there being no difference between male and female median pay last year to female median pay being 2.06% higher than male median pay this year. It was considered that this is due to the ongoing efforts to eradicate pay inequalities by continuing the use of job evaluation systems.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

5 JOINT EDI STRATEGY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES - UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director for Workforce and Organisational Development setting out the 18-month review of the Joint Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for 2021.

At the heart of the strategy were five joint equality objectives; to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes, to embed equality and inclusion in our way of working and meet our statutory and mandatory requirements, to actively consult, engage, involve and communicate with our communities, to develop an inclusive and reflective leadership, workforce and culture and to improve access to information services and data collection and usage.

It was reported that Covid-19 had profoundly affected every aspect of lives and has disproportionately affected some people and communities more than others. The pandemic together had laid bare many of the deep-rooted structural inequalities.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6 JOINT WORKFORCE RACE EQUALITY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Development providing the second comprehensive joint report looking at 'Workforce Race Equality' (WRES) with findings for Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) and NHS Heywood Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS HMRCCG).

The report triangulated the data with thematic insights and proposed recommendations and coincided with a review of data and insights gathered by both organisations, key issues included:

- The Greater Manchester Workforce Race as a key data indicator returns for public sector organisations.
- The CCG's annual NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (NHS WRES) data submission to NHS England and seventh WRES Report for Governing Body.
- Engagement with the Joint Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network over 2021 and meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, local Joint Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy and Equality Objectives, along with a blueprint to look at other protected characteristics in the workplace.

It was reported that:

- RBC employed 3113 staff as of 31st March 2021, of which 12.3% are identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff, 83.9% White and 3.8% unknown (undeclared and incomplete data). This shows a 14% increase for staff employed, 0.8% increase of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff and % increase of white staff.
- HMRCCG employed 116 staff as of 31st March 2021(GM WRES; 108 NHS WRES). The number of the CCG staff was small when divided into different protected groups.
- The ethnic make-up of the staff in HMRCCG is 16.4% (GM WRES) Black Asian Minority Ethnic and had decreased by 1% from March 2020 when the CCG had 17.3% Black Asian Minority Ethnic.
- The non-voting Black Asian Minority Ethnic Governing Body membership had increased since March 2020 when it was 33.3 % to 36.4% and have percentage difference is 9.1% more than the overall CCG Black Asian Minority Ethnic workforce which is at 17.6% (NHS WRES).
- Subjective experience of some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff working in RBC and the CCG identifies themes including culture, bias, recruitment, career progression.

Following consideration of the information provided above it was recommended that each organisation should focus on:

- Improving data quality and data gaps and completeness.
- Reviewing disciplinary process and promoting the Dignity at Work Policy.

- Identify solutions to improve external, internal recruitment, introduce reverse mentoring and shadowing opportunities, developing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff to sit on recruitment panels.
- Submit data to GM 6 monthly as required by all public bodies in Greater Manchester.
- Continue to support Black Asian Minority Ethnic staff network and celebrate the achievements and contributions made by our BAME staff.

RESOLVED

That the report be supported.