

Report of Director of Resources

Report to Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board

Date: 20th September 2021

Subject: Improving the experience and outcomes of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues at Leeds City Council

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| Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Has consultation been carried out? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will the decision be open for call-in? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: 10.4(3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary

1. Main issues

- In February 2021, Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board received an update on the joint commitment from Corporate Leadership Team and our BAME Staff Network to improve the work experience and outcomes for BAME colleagues at Leeds City Council
- Scrutiny Board has asked for further updates, and this report gives the latest position.
- A Race Equality Action Plan for 2021-23 has now been agreed, and a corporate activity plan is in place and progressing. A Task and Finish group, led by Sal Tariq (Director of Children and Families) will take forward the delivery of this work.
- The BAME Staff Network has been through a transition period, during which the Chair and Steering Group Membership has changed. Incoming network members have spent time reviewing existing action plans and commitments, and this continues to refine our approach, particularly in terms of which aspects of the plan are deemed most pressing by our employees.
- In August, Leeds City Council took part in the launch of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Anti-racism Movement #WYHRootOutRacism. The council is joining with over 400 organisations across West Yorkshire and Harrogate in pledging to Root Out Racism across the region.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- Our [People Strategy 2020-25](#) sets out our ambition to be the Best Place to Work with a clear focus on creating a great all round employee experience for all staff, with the support of their leaders and managers working in a positive organisational culture, driven by our council values.
- Inclusion sits at the heart of our People Strategy – we strive to ensure that all employees can be their best and are treated fairly.

3. Resource Implications

- The Council employs 2005 BAME employees (July 2021), which represents 14% of the council's overall workforce. At senior levels in the council, 12% of colleagues identify as BAME. Scrutiny Board is keen to understand more about the council's workforce profile and how this compares to the wider city working age population. This work is underway and more information is supplied in 2.3.1 in the Background Section of this report.

Recommendations

- a) Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board is asked to:
- I. Note the contents of this report.
 - II. Note the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-23 and the council wide activity in place to support this work.
 - III. Receive further updates and reports as this important work progresses.
 - IV. Receive wider inclusion updates in the future, including updates on our work with colleagues with a disability and those who are carers.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board with an update on the joint commitment from Corporate Leadership Team and our BAME Staff Network to improve the work experience and outcomes for BAME colleagues at Leeds City Council.

2. Background information

- 2.1 A joint commitment between Corporate Leadership Team and our BAME Staff Network was made in 2020 – with the following intent:

- Do more to listen to and understand your real lived experiences at work
- Not shy away from uncomfortable and challenging conversations, nor ignore hard truths
- Do all we can to eliminate racism and inequality – wherever we find it
- Deliver immediate and long term change by creating the plan together, and keeping your issues high on the agenda
- Expect everyone in the council to play their part – this is a whole #TeamLeeds effort, and there will be allies right across the organisation working with you for change

- Take a zero tolerance approach to racism in the workplace and out within the communities we serve, taking all allegations of racism seriously. We will challenge and address inappropriate behaviour

2.2 The impact and outcomes we aim to achieve include:

- Trust across the organisation to speak up
- Better progression and development
- A more representative workforce
- Reduced racism and a better everyday experience.

2.3 Much debate continues about use of the BAME term, inside and outside the council, and whether it is relevant for current times and appropriately acknowledges the breadth of different experiences from a very diverse set of backgrounds. There are a wide range of perspectives and views to take into account. We have approached our BAME Staff Network for a view, and, for the time being, they want us to continue to use the term. This will be kept under constant review, as national and local discussions develop.

2.4.1 The overall representation varies across our directorates, by grade, service and role. Work is taking place to produce a more detailed and granular level report which will enable us to better understand the representation of different groups that make up our BAME community and how this compares to our working age population in the city. This will be shared in the near future as part of a new dataset for tracking progress against Race Equality Plan measures. In the meantime, a summary of the broad council picture is given in the table below, showing representation levels at different grades, for the organisation as a whole.

| Employees | | | Ethnicity | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|------|-------------------|--------------|
| | FTE | Headcount | Not BAME | BAME | Prefer not to say | Not declared |
| Staffing Numbers | 12103 | 14137 | 10812 | 2005 | 30 | 1290 |
| | | 100% | 76% | 14% | 0% | 9% |
| Grade | | | | | | |
| A1-C3 | 6283 | 7859 | 5846 | 1138 | 19 | 856 |
| | | 100% | 74% | 14% | 0% | 11% |
| SO1-PO4 | 4268 | 4636 | 3588 | 689 | 10 | 349 |
| | | 100% | 77% | 15% | 0% | 8% |
| PO5-PO6 | 1195 | 1269 | 1068 | 134 | 1 | 66 |
| | | 100% | 84% | 11% | 0% | 5% |
| JNC | 357 | 373 | 310 | 44 | 0 | 19 |
| | | 100% | 83% | 12% | 0% | 5% |

3. Main issues

3.1 Race Equality Action Plan 2021-23

- 3.1.1 Further to the original short term activity plan, a Race Equality Action Plan 2021-23 has been developed. This has been approved by the Corporate Leadership team and the BAME Staff network.
- 3.1.2 The BAME staff network reviewed the feedback from the council wide BAME Staff survey which was conducted Autumn 2020, to make sure that all of the key issues were being addressed in the plan. Survey results were also shared with all Chief Officers to inform service level action planning.
- 3.1.3 Four main strands emerged from the staff survey around improving the everyday experience of BAME colleagues at work. These were:
- Education and understanding, creating open and honest discussion, respecting and celebrating difference
 - Opportunities and progression for BAME staff, and more BAME staff in senior management
 - Being valued, listened to and treated equally and fairly
 - Tackling racism and discrimination, including from customers, with a genuine commitment to change
- 3.1.4 A copy of the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-23 can be seen in **Appendix 1**. It outlines a set of key priorities, outcomes and measures.
- 3.1.5 An associated delivery plan is now being created, with clear accountabilities and timescales. The delivery plan will be agreed and tracked through a CLT sponsored Task and Finish group. Sal Tariq, Director of the Children and Families directorate will set up and lead this group, and bring in a broad and diverse range of people to ensure that different perspectives inform the group's work. The necessary connections to corporate groups and local service Equality and Diversity Boards will be made, as part of a review of council wide equality and diversity governance arrangements.
- 3.1.6 Our incoming BAME Staff Network Chair and Steering Group members have put forward a number of suggestions for priority attention, following their initial reflections on the Race Equality Plan. These are listed below, and are places where we are looking to dedicate our immediate attention and resource:
- Establishing a zero-tolerance policy and culture
 - Staff progression and opportunity
 - Supporting managers to be confident and competent around race in the workplace
 - Inclusive recruitment
- 3.1.7 In addition to the new Task and Finish group, quarterly meetings between CLT and the BAME Network will continue. There have been 4 meetings so far, and the next meeting is 4th October 2021. Each Director provides a written update in advance of

each meeting, setting out the local service activity taking place, and enabling a healthy check and challenge from the network, and constructive joint working on key issues.

3.1.8 Alongside the local service activity, a range of corporate actions are in progress to support delivery of the Race Equality Action Plan. These are described in the table below.

| Race Equality Plan priority | Activity |
|---|--|
| <p>Staff Support</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review and checks regarding the experiences of BAME staff who raise claims of racism - so that we are confident that all cases are taken seriously and we improve the support people get in these circumstances. • Introducing the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian approach – with the intention for a council-wide roll out. • Working alongside Social Care colleagues in Adults and Children’s to develop a Zero Tolerance policy/commitment, for front line social care settings in the council and across the city. We anticipate further rollout to other council areas once developed, and a review of wider council processes and systems where needed. • Reviewing the Council’s Manager habits, to strengthen our expectations around diversity and inclusion, and drive cultural change so that more BAME colleagues have positive experiences around the support they receive from their managers. • Introducing an improved development offer for leaders and managers – to raise awareness and improve skills and knowledge around inclusion. To include practical areas such as ensuring managers are confident and competent in addressing reported incidents of racial discrimination within work. • Continuing to ensure that all BAME colleagues have up to date individual Covid Risk Assessments - for those who continue in front line roles, and those who are returning to the workplace in the near future. • Encouraging BAME colleagues to take on the role of ‘decision makers’ in formal meetings and casework - so that decision makers in our disciplinary, grievance and appeals process are representative. |
| <p>Staff progression, learning and development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing recruitment and selection – ensuring we have fair and transparent policy, process and practice. Removing barriers and bias, diverse panels, training |

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| | <p>managers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved monitoring and analysis of recruitment and progression data for BAME colleagues – to identify issues, guide our decisions and target resources into the right areas. • Positive action and support for BAME colleagues to aid career progression, especially into leadership positions –e.g. BAME Fellowship programme, reverse mentoring programme • Establishing our corporate position around mandatory training – for all staff and all managers. |
| <p>Communication and Engagement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and agreeing a corporate workforce vision for Inclusion and Diversity • Creating a central web/intranet Hub for Race Equality to aid communication • Creating more and better opportunities to listen to and understand the real, lived experiences of colleagues at work, and build a culture in which people have a strong voice and this influences service development and improvement. Ensuring we act on the results from the BAME Staff Survey, and make tangible improvements to the way we work. • Working alongside directorate teams, to share Equality Impact Assessment updates and findings from service reviews. • Continuing to deliver inclusion events and training throughout the year, with checks that they are reaching all teams. To raise the awareness and understanding and ensure that more staff act as strong ambassadors and allies, and have the knowledge and skills they need. |
| <p>Measurement and impact</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing and sharing regular data and reports that show how we are performing on all of the measures included in the Race Equality Action Plan • Working alongside colleagues on the Workforce Race Equality Standard Pilot – to review the information that we produce relating to BAME workforce issues, in all aspects of employment. • Equality impact assessment on Future Working Arrangements programme, to ensure that any issues and challenges specific to BAME colleagues are identified and addressed. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with directorates to ensure BAME communities across the city have access to relevant, high quality services – whether directly delivered or commissioned by the council. |
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3.1.9 Leeds City Council continues to engage with its partners, including the Anchor Institutions, the Health & Social Care Academy, NHS and other networks, to share its policy and practice, learn from others and augment its impact across the city and its communities.

3.1.10 A recent example of our regional collaboration around Race inequality is the Root Out Racism movement ([Root out racism \(wyhpartnership.co.uk\)](http://wyhpartnership.co.uk)). The #WYHRootOutRacism movement is looking to highlight the lived experiences of staff and prompt conversations across organisations on how we can all better inform ourselves on anti-racist behaviours, to stand up against racism, and to stand together.

3.1.11 In addition to regular updates on our Race Equality Action Plan, it is proposed that similar updates are brought forward on our wider inclusion work. Scrutiny have been particularly keen to hear more about our work with colleagues with a disability and those who are carers.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Listening to the lived experiences of all BAME colleagues is fundamental to driving positive change. As set out in our joint commitment and Race Equality Action Plan, all members of the workforce will be expected to play their role too.

4.1 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 Our relentless focus on this crucial work will continue, including progressing the organisational Action Plan, further creating a supportive work environment for ethnic minority staff and being informed by listening to the experiences of our diverse communities.

4.2 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 Inclusion underpins the delivery of the Best Council Plan, our People Strategy 2020-25 and Best Place to Work ambitions.

4.3 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.3.1 The business case for inclusion and diversity is stronger than ever. It directly impacts on team performance and creativity, service reputation and reach, relationships with communities and partners, talent attraction and retention. There are clear benefits for getting it right, and significant consequences and lost opportunities for not doing so.

4.4 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.4.1 There are no legal implications related to this report.

4.5 Risk management

4.5.1 A stronger accountability and governance framework is now being finalised to support delivery in 2021/22.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Resources and Strategy Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- I. Note the contents of this report.
- II. Note the Race Equality Action Plan 2021-23 and the council wide activity in place to support this work.
- III. Receive further updates and reports as this important work progresses.
- IV. Receive wider inclusion updates in the future, including updates on our work with colleagues with a disability and those who are carers.

6 Background documents¹

6.1 Appendix 1 – Race Equality Action Plan 2021/23.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.