


<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>General Purposes Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">14 September 2016</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Zena Cooke, Corporate Director Resources</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> [Unrestricted]</p>
<p><b>Workforce Diversity</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Stuart Young, Interim HR, OD and Transformation Manager
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

## Summary

The Workforce Strategy, agreed by CMT March 2016 and presented to HR Committee for information on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016, contains the following strategic aim:

- We will promote and celebrate the equality and diversity of our workforce, ensuring we are recognised internally and externally as a diversity friendly employer.

The annual equalities report is used to analyse and monitor the council's workforce against each of the protected characteristics, as defined by the Equalities Act (2010). This report provides a summary of the findings of the 2015/16 equalities report and key actions that have been identified to further promote the diversity of the workforce.

## Recommendations:

General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the summary of the annual equalities report on workforce diversity and the programmed development activities to promote diversity, increase opportunity, raise awareness and provide support to all employees in the council.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

1.1 This is an information report. No decision is required.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

2.1 This is an information report. No alternative options are presented.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

3.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the council is required to consider all individuals when carrying out its day to day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to its own employees. It is required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out its activities.

3.2 The Equalities Act (2010) introduced nine protected characteristics for which the council must show due regard. These protected characteristics are: age; disability; sex; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; sexual orientation; religion or belief; and marriage and civil partnership.

3.3 The council's commitment to equalities is an important cross-cutting theme that runs through all strategies and is integral to everything that we do. The Single Equality Framework stands alongside the Strategic Plan as the council's corporate strategy for understanding diversity, tackling inequality and promoting cohesion.

3.4 In March 2016 the Corporate Management Team agreed the council's Workforce Strategy for 2016 – 2021. The strategy was presented to HR Committee for information in April 2016.

3.5 The Workforce Strategy replaces all other strategies concerning the workforce. Thus, the strategic aims and objectives of the previous Workforce to Reflect the Community strategy, the People Strategy (and associated frameworks, such as staff engagement) and the Learning and Development strategy were reviewed, updated and combined within the Workforce Strategy.

3.6 The Workforce Strategy provides the following statement in relation to workforce diversity:

“We continue to be recognised as a ‘positive about disability’ employer and are currently ranked as number 30 in the Stonewall Index of the top 100 best employers for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff. We have been accredited as Silver by Investors in People (IiP) and will be aiming to achieve Gold accreditation in our next assessment in 2017. When comparing our senior management teams to other London boroughs, we have the fourth highest proportion of our top earners that are disabled. We also have the third highest proportion of our top earners that are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). We recognise that to serve our community fully, we need to have a workforce

that broadly represents the diverse make-up of our borough. We review this every year in our workforce equalities report along with other measures to ensure we have a fair and equitable workplace and that we are meeting our equalities obligations as a public body.”

- 3.7 The workforce equalities report for 2015/16 has been produced. A summary of the key findings for workforce overview and by salary level is detailed below. The report uses 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 data where a snapshot of annual performance was required. Figures quoted in the report exclude schools staff and agency workers and include zero hour/casual and hourly paid workers.
- 3.8 The council recently introduced monitoring of transsexual staff and has drafted a gender-variant, transsexual and transgender policy. As yet, too few council employees have identified themselves as transgender or undergoing gender reassignment to undertake analysis of this protected characteristic within the equalities report.

#### **4 COUNCIL WORKFORCE DIVERSITY SUMMARY**

- 4.1 The workforce continues to contract, both in terms of headcount and full-time-equivalents, with a decrease from over 4,500 (FTE) to c. 3,750 between 2011 and 2016. This process is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. This means that changes in the make-up of the workforce in terms of ethnicity, sexuality etc. will be more difficult to achieve, given the reduced number of new recruits to the council. However, small changes in the make-up of the workforce will, as the number of employees falls, have greater impact.
- 4.2 The gender ratio of council staff, whilst heavily biased to women, is not appreciably different to that of comparable councils. This is due to a high number of posts offered as part time and term time opportunities, which follows the national trend of higher levels of females with caring responsibilities.
- 4.3 The age profile of staff is biased towards younger people, when compared with the median age profile of London councils. This reflects the age profile of the Tower Hamlets population, which is significantly younger than that of other London boroughs.
- 4.4 A quarter of staff have not supplied information on their sexuality. 3.3% of staff (4.3% of those who identified their sexuality) declared that they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. Employees identifying themselves to be gender variant, transsexual or transgender are sufficiently few as to make analysis impossible. No information is available from either Tower Hamlets or London councils to act as a comparator.
- 4.5 The percentage of BME (Black and minority ethnic) employees is the third highest in London, and at over 55% is slightly higher than the percentage of BME people in Tower Hamlets.

- 4.6 With regard to religion, the make-up of the council broadly reflects that of the local population, though the proportion of Muslims (34.5%) to Christians (27.1%) in the population is reversed (27% - 32%) in the workforce. The increase in the number of Muslims in the workforce reflects a reduction in both white employees and white residents of the borough over time.
- 4.7 The percentage of employees identified as having a disability, 4.9%, is higher than the percentage of people of working age in the borough (4.1%). This is reflected in London-wide information, where Tower Hamlets had a significantly higher number of disabled employees than the London-wide median.

### **Workforce by Salary Level**

- 4.8 Women make up 64% of the workforce, and should, therefore occupy 64% of posts at all salary levels. In fact, women are hugely over-represented in the lowest (<£20,000) salary band, reflecting that a number of posts at this level are part-time and/or term-time only, which follows the national trend of higher level of females with caring responsibilities. In posts attracting salaries of between £20,000 and £70,000, female representation is slightly below the 64% that would be expected, though with a descending trend. Above this level men predominate, with 57% being male and 43% female.
- 4.9 Older staff are increasingly prevalent as salary levels rise, with younger employees concentrated at lower salary levels. Whilst there is a clear disparity, given the career arcs of the vast majority of working people, this is neither unexpected nor an issue that requires attention.
- 4.10 Bangladeshi staff are over-represented at the £20,000-£30,000 salary band and under-represented at higher salary level, whilst Black staff are similarly over-represented at the <£20,000 salary level. It is notable that the Bangladeshi age profile is significantly younger than the overall profile of staff, a disparity that is even more pronounced when Bangladeshis are compared to White employees. It may be that at least some of the under-representation at higher salary levels is better explained by age than by ethnicity.
- 4.11 There is a significant proportion of the workforce (25%) whose sexual orientation is 'not stated'. This does not vary hugely at different salary levels, though is significantly higher for zero hours workers.
- 4.12 Given the relatively small numbers of employees in each of the salary bands, it is difficult to come to any overarching conclusions regarding the representation of LGBT staff at various salary levels. However the salary levels of gay men, lesbians and bisexual people are not so far from the expected distribution to cause major concerns.
- 4.13 Disabled staff are under-represented at the lowest 2 salary bands and over-represented in every salary band in the 30k – 70k range and again at the highest (£100,000+) band. The council, like all employers, could always do more, but this distribution would suggest that the council's long-term equalities policies towards people with disabilities are broadly successful.

- 4.14 Muslims are under-represented at all salary levels above £30,000, while Christians broadly conform to the expected distribution (though less so in the lowest salary band). Of all religion/belief systems, those employees with no religion perform best at the most senior levels within the council, representing 31% of staff at the £60k+ level, despite forming only 14% of council staff overall.

## **5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

- 5.1 The above summary highlights that, in general, the council's recruitment practice is broadly reflective of the community make-up. However, these new starters tend to be younger and therefore lack the experience and/or qualifications to work at senior levels; making it more important to provide an effective and appropriate development offer to council employees.
- 5.2 A review of corporate learning and development, including leadership development, is currently underway. The aim of the review is to identify the skills and attributes that all employees, at all levels, will require to deliver council services in the future. Leadership and management development is key and a programme of training, mentoring, network events and partnership working is planned to enable employees to share learning and best practice. A report will be presented to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in September 2016 to provide an overview of the programme and a plan detailing short, medium and long term actions. Once approved a learning and development strategy will be developed and launched with staff.
- 5.3 The annual submission for the Stonewall Index is currently being completed. This provides the evidence from which Stonewall determine the top 100 LGBT friendly employers. The council is aiming to maintain or improve on the current place of 30<sup>th</sup> in the list. Activities undertaken this year include raising visibility of LGBT issues by providing rainbow lanyards to staff and flying the rainbow flag during the Pride Festival; the provision of training on a range of equality and diversity issues for Your Voice Ambassadors; continued provision of learning and development opportunities relating to LGBT awareness for staff and managers; and work with the LGBT staff forum on initiatives and events, including a number linked to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) and Pride.
- 5.4 There is also work being undertaken by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), funded by the Local Government Association (LGA), for which Tower Hamlets will be one of three pilot authorities. This work will look at more inclusive recruitment practices that break down barriers, e.g. for disabled staff, and also production of a business case as to the benefits of carrying out equality and diversity work, including the return on investment it produces.
- 5.5 An action for next year under the Workforce Strategy is to sign up to the London Healthy Workplace Charter, which provides a framework for action to help employers build good practice in health and wellbeing and work in their

organisation. The framework reflects best practice and is endorsed nationally by Public Health England. Work is currently being undertaken to produce a submission for the entry 'commitment level' before going for the intermediate 'achievement' level next year. This includes work around:

- Corporate support for wellbeing
- Attendance management
- Health and safety requirements
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Tobacco
- Physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Problematic use of alcohol and other substances.

5.6 The council achieved 'highly commended' in this year's Municipal Journal Awards, under the category of Disability Confident, for the work it has done to reduce stigma and promote confidence around disability. This included work done in relation to learning difficulties, mental health, hidden disability and physical disability, in relation to both staff and residents.

5.7 A Time to Change Employers Forum was established at the beginning of 2016, which includes as members:- Clinical Commissioning Group; Gateway Housing; Mind; Barts Health; Queen Mary University Student Union; Canary Wharf Group; Metropolitan Police; East London Foundation Trust; THCVS, as well as the council. The aim is to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental health and this will be achieved through the following 3 work streams: -

1. Develop a business case for different organisations in Tower Hamlets, outlining the approach and return on investment
2. Make best use of resources and best practice based on case studies that can be shared with local employers
3. Develop a communications strategy and joint promotion campaign to share what we are doing with local employers.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

6.1 This report is for information only; there are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. LEGAL COMMENTS**

7.1 This is a noting report in respect of the annual equalities report summary and the programmed equality activities. The report has reference to the public sector equality duty which is set out in the body of the report.

7.2 The council's Workforce Strategy identifies a number of protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act) against which employment targets are measured. Where the Strategy provides for developmental activities to improve the representation of certain groups with protected characteristics, the council will also need to review this going forward to

ensure that it remains necessary to take action to improve the workforce balance once identified equality imbalance has been dealt with.

- 7.3 The council must take care to ensure that policies and initiatives are implemented in a manner that remains within the permissible range of positive action under the Equality Act 2010 and not to interpret policies and guidance in such a way as to disadvantage those persons whom are not part of those initiatives and who do not share the targeted protected characteristic.

## **8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The public sector equality duty is embedded in all areas of the council's work and ensuring that the council attracts and develops a diverse range of employees is crucial to providing excellent services to the community.

## **9. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The council has a duty to promote equality and diversity. The annual equalities report monitors the impact of the council's approach across each of the protected characteristics. Where areas of inequality are identified through the annual report an action plan is developed to mitigate these concerns.

## **10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 10.1 There are no implications.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

## **12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no implications.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- NONE.

#### **Appendices**

- NONE

#### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

- NONE.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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