

# CABINET

23 June 2015

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Title:</b> Equalities and Diversity in Employment Policy - Action Plan  |   |
| <b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Central Services</b>   |   |
| <b>Open Report</b>   | <b>For Decision</b>   |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b> All   | <b>Key Decision:</b> Yes  |
| <b>Report Author:</b> Martin Rayson,<br>Divisional Director of Human Resources<br>and Organisational Development   | <b>Contact Details:</b><br>Tel. 02 08227 3113<br>Email: martin.rayson@lbbd.gov.uk |
| <b>Accountable Divisional Director:</b> Martin Rayson, Divisional Director HR & OD   |   |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Chris Naylor, Chief Executive   |   |
| <b>Summary</b><br><br>At the Cabinet meeting of 16 February 2015, Members reviewed the Equality and Diversity in Employment policy and agreed targets for year on year recruitment and the representation in the workforce as a whole. Since that time, officers have reviewed the challenges that exist in achieving the targets and present in this paper proposals for further action and the additional resources required to deliver those actions.<br><br>Analysis of the data shows that the Council currently does not have a workforce which is, at all levels, representative of the local community. In looking at the data available in more detail, it is evident that there is a particular need to address the following issues : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The ability to attract candidates from the local community who are from protected groups, as defined by equality law;</li><li>- Tackling the fall-out rate of people from the BME community through the recruitment process (i.e. % of BME applicants compared to the % of BME staff appointed);</li><li>- Ensuring there is a higher percentage of BME staff and women in more senior positions in the Council (PO7 and above).</li></ul> The proposed programme seeks though to take a more holistic approach towards diversity in the Council's workforce and will cover the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improving recruitment rates – attraction, recruitment process</li><li>- Enhancing skill levels and opportunities for talented individuals</li><li>- Emphasising how our values reflect our principles around equality</li><li>- Understanding why people exit the organisation</li></ul> The actions proposed are set out in Appendix B. The cost of delivering the Action Plan is estimated to be £200,000 spread over the two financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17. There will be a need to appoint to an additional temporary post in the |   |

Council's Job Shop, plus some external spend to support key initiatives, such as the talent programme and exit interview process.

Progress will be reported to Cabinet on a six monthly basis.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the progress to date in respect of the implementation of the Equalities and Diversity in Employment Policy; and
- (ii) Agree the Action Plan at Appendix B to the report.

### **Reason(s)**

To support the ambition of the Council to employ a workforce that is representative of the community it serves.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

1.1 At its meeting on 16 February, Cabinet received a report on the Equality in Employment Policy and agreed the following:

- i) Agree the following targets as part of the Council's Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy:
  - (a) That recruitment in any one year reflects the breakdown of the working population in the Borough;
  - (b) To achieve an annual 10% increase in 2015/16 to 2017/18 in the proportion of the workforce from the BME community (i.e. a 2.7% increase in 2015/16 on the baseline of 27%, that is increasing the current figure of just under 1000 to around 1030);
  - (c) To reduce the number of staff who do not declare whether they have a disability or not by 30% in 2015/16, in order for a suitable target to be set for future years to increase the number of people with disabilities working in the organisation.
- (ii) Support a campaign to promote tolerance of all nine groups recognised as "protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010" equally.

1.2 It is recognised that change will take some time. LBBDD has a fairly stable workforce and change in its profile will be incremental. The workforce has been slowly changing to reflect the community we serve, but if we wish to increase the pace of change, we will need to take additional actions and target some resources on the issue.

## **2. What Additional Actions Should We Take?**

2.1 Since the February Cabinet report, we have undertaken an in-depth review of the statistics that are available in order to better understand the issues and the actions we need to take. This statistical analysis is included at Appendix A.

2.2 Based on this statistical analysis, if our aim is to increase the diversity of our organisation, we need to look at four areas in particular:

- Improving recruitment rates – attraction, recruitment process
- Enhancing skill levels and opportunities for talented individuals
- Emphasising how our values reflect our principles around equality
- Understanding why people exit the organisation

2.3 Whilst there was an emphasis in the Cabinet Report on increasing BME representation in the workforce, the actions that we take should address issues around all the protected characteristics. These actions can be reflected in the Council's Single Equalities scheme, which is currently being refreshed.

### **3. Proposed Action Plan**

3.1 The proposed actions are set out below under each of the four headings in paragraph 2.2. The action plan at Appendix B shows when and by whom the action will be taken.

#### Recruitment – Supply

- Promote the brand that LBBDD is a “Borough of Opportunities”, ensuring that the brand is attractive to all parts of the community
- Ensure posts are advertised in places that the BME community will look, e.g. the Trumpet newspaper published every Friday, or ensure the community gets used to looking on the Council's website for vacancies with the Council.
- Work with groups active in the BME community to identify and overcome any recruitment barriers.
- Work with the job-shops to host job fairs where we can sell the Council as an employer and explain where to access details of vacancies and the recruitment process (potentially working alongside BHRUT, Redbridge and Havering)
- Explore working with schools and colleges to promote careers in the Council to school and college leavers.
- Include on adverts a statement that we “encourage in particular applications from people living in the Borough.”
- Ensure that recruitment adverts and job details, including the job description and person specification, are written in plain language and are free of unnecessary jargon.

#### Recruitment – Process

- In evaluating options to replace i-grasp as our recruitment software, ensure that the views of applicants from all part of the community are taken into account
- Target failed applicants for Council jobs using i-grasp to invite them to personal statement workshops.
- Ensure there is at least one member of the recruitment panel from outside the service area. We will initially do this in those areas where statistics show there is a large percentage drop-out through the recruitment process.
- Continue to seek to create talent pools for roles, working alongside Job Centre Plus and other relevant agencies
- Monitor training of recruiting managers

## Skills and Talent

- Ensure that the Council's new approach to progressing talent and understanding the skill mix in the Council, is focused on identifying and progressing staff who are under-represented at more senior levels.
- Review and revamp the arrangements for staff support networks (currently for BME, disability and LGBT staff) so that they become more representative and can play a more proactive role in supporting the talent management agenda. Consider whether other staff groups may have value. There could be one overall network for issues affecting BME, disabled or female staff or on specific issues, such as coping with Cancer.

## Work on Values

- Create key messages about how our commitment to equalities and diversity is reflected in our new values (and vision)
- Create opportunities for the Leader and other senior leaders to promote that commitment (building on "in their shoes", the gender equality charter) and /or act as "champions"
- Run once more the "effective customer conversations" training for staff, which previously sought to counter the influence of the BNP and the noise around community disharmony, but was equally valid in reminding staff of the behaviours and attitudes we expect to see displayed at work.
- Run more dignity at work training for front-line staff and ensure that it has our values at its heart.
- Promote the social model of disability and provide more information on disability awareness.

## Understanding Reasons For Leaving

- We are seeking to improve our approach on exit interviews. The form within Oracle is rather simplistic and the data cannot easily be brought together and interpreted. Completion is also voluntary. We are looking to introduce a Survey-Monkey tool to enhance the process, but there is the potential to set up a particular arrangement for groups where we feel there may be an issue, where an exit interview is conducted by an external third party and thereby concerns about anonymity can be overcome.

## **4. Resourcing this programme**

- 4.1 This area of work has increased in priority for this Council. The resources available to support equality work have reduced significantly in the last five years. Whilst most of the actions can be taken by LBBd staff, there is a need to boost the resources available in the Job Shop and HR to do so.
- 4.2 Some of the activity will be commissioned from external organisations, such as the exit interview procedure, refresher training for staff around equalities issues and support to the talent management programme (assessment centres etc). The cost of the additional temporary staff is known, but the external work has yet to be commissioned. Our estimate is that the spend will be no more than £200k over two financial years and a budget of that amount has been allocated to cover the additional costs.

- 4.3 Making such an allocation in the current financial climate demonstrates the commitment of this administration to equality and diversity and the recognition that the quality of our services and our ability to effectively respond to our financial challenges depends on having a workforce at all levels which is representative of the community in Barking and Dagenham that the council serves. Members will be able to review through the action plan and the achievement of the targets set, whether this additional investment is delivering the returns expected.
- 4.4 We will seek to learn from other organisations who have faced the same challenges and will potentially seek some external challenge or audit activity from a suitably-qualified individual or organisation.

## 5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Carl Tomlinson, Finance Group Manager

- 5.1 The proposals in this paper are expected to cost £200,000 across 2015/16 and 2016/17. This will be funded through the budget surplus. Human Resources budgets have reduced due to savings commitments and as such will not be able to bear any additional cost in respect of these proposals, therefore, the equality and diversity proposals will need to be contained within the allocation. There is no anticipated financial burden on any other service or departmental budget from the work outlined from the proposals in this paper.

## 6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Chris Pickering, Principal Solicitor

- 6.1 The policy and actions proposed ensure that that the Council complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty. However the Council recognises the importance, from a customer service perspective, of having a workforce that is representative of the community it serves and the actions here support that priority.

## 7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Customer Impact** – The quality of services to the customer will be enhanced if the Council has a workforce which is representative of the community.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:** None

### List of appendices:

- **Appendix A** – Statistical Analysis
- **Appendix B** – Equality & Diversity in Employment Action Plan