



MINUTES OF THE EQUALITIES COMMITTEE Monday 11 January 2016 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Kansagra (Vice Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors Harrison, Pavey, Tatler and Thomas

Apologies for lateness were received from: Councillors Pavey and Tatler.

1. **Chair**

Given the lateness of the Chair, the Vice-Chair took the Chair and remained so for the duration of the meeting.

2. **Declarations of interests**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 October 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising**

None.

5. **Deputations**

None.

6. **Update on Accessibility Improvements to the Civic Centre**

Russell Burnaby, Facilities Management, introduced the report stating that further to the progress report of 12 October 2015 and the update provided to Members in December 2015, this report set out recent progress on the access related works undertaken to the Civic Centre to further improve accessibility to the building.

He informed the Committee that the improvements were based on practical usage and feedback from residents, relevant groups and users of the building and in accordance with recommendations set out in the Accessibility Audit carried out in August 2014.

Members thanked Russell Burnaby for the update welcoming the improvements that had been implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report and the further improvement works delivered to date be noted;
- (ii) that the improvements programmed for the future and the process by which feedback received by building users would be monitored, considered and addressed, be noted.

7. Report on equality and diversity related complaints received by Brent Council (April-September 2015)

Peter Gadsdon, Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships, introduced the report stating that the Equalities Committee had requested a report on equality and diversity related complaints at their meeting in July 2015.

He stated that the report provided an overview of the diversity profile of people who have made complaints to the council (complainants) and any associated equalities issues. The report covered both corporate and statutory social care complaints during the first half of the year (April 2015 to September 2015) where this information has been declared or provided.

Members noted that, in the first six months of the year 2015/16, the council had received a total of 984 first stage complaints, comprising 921 Corporate Complaints and 63 Statutory Complaints.

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, informed Members of the Committee that the statistics of the complainants were in line with the general profile of Brent's population.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the findings of this report be noted;
- (ii) that it be noted that based on the findings there was no evidence of discriminatory practices or trends.

8. Cllr Pavey Action Plan Review of Equalities (December 2015 update)

Councillor Kansagra welcomed Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing to the meeting.

He invited Phil Porter to provide an update on the *Achieving Excellence in Employment and Management Practice* strand for which he is the CMT lead.

Phil Porter stated that a staff survey would be designed and undertaken towards the end of March 2016, he informed Members that the results would then be analysed and fed into the new Corporate Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Tatler, he stated that nationally benchmarked questions would be used to form the survey. These questions could be shared with the Committee if Committee members wished.

Councillor Tatler asked about staff members being encouraged to declare mental or physical disabilities. Phil Porter stated that the Council's staff fora would be used to encourage staff to declare a disability. He stated that, historically, some staff had been reluctant to do so but that progress was being made in this area.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

9. **Brent Council's Collaborative Mentoring programme**

Mildred Phillips, HR Director, and Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality, introduced the report.

It was noted that the Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by the Corporate Management Team in December 2015 and would be rolled out from January 2016. The aim of the programme was to promote and facilitate regular dialogue between senior managers and staff as a means of empowering junior staff members, fostering good cross-organisational working relationships, developing a greater understanding of diversity from differing perspectives and improving the sense of belonging to One Council.

The programme would be managed by the HR team and participants would be provided with relevant support and guidance.

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, stated that senior managers would also be encouraged to shadow junior staff. An all staff communication would be sent out that week encouraging expressions of interest.

Councillor Pavey asked how the programme would be evaluated after it had ended.

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality, stated that it was anticipated that the proposed initiatives would have a positive impact on all participating staff members, particularly those from under-represented groups as they would have a regular exposure to senior managers, which will hopefully increase their confidence in interacting with senior managers and applying for more senior roles within or outside the organisation. The diversity profile and feedback of participating staff members would be monitored and the Equalities Committee would receive a progress update at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the contents of the report and supporting Appendices be noted;
- (ii) that a progress update on the Collaborative Mentoring programme be submitted to this committee in in April 2016.

10. **Leadership Development Programme Proposals 2015 - 2016**

Mildred Phillips, HR Director, introduced the report stating that, following the report to the Council's Corporate Management Team on the Leadership Development Programme in August 2015, this paper provided more detail on the proposals.

She stated that the paper demonstrated how input from HRIG and other key stakeholders have ensured that the programme met the Council's individual, manager and organisational needs, including the Councillor Pavey review.

Mildred Philips stated that the Hr Improvement Group had agreed that there would be two levels of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) qualification. The CMI Level 3 Certificate for PO1 to PO4 which would be completed in three to six months and the CMI Level 5 Diploma for PO5 to PO8 in 9 months.

The number of employees to be put on the scheme would depend on the number of applicants but it was anticipated that there would be about 30 employees in this first cohort. A further update on the programme and selected cohort would be provided at next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that approval be given to the Leadership Development Programme which would start in February 2016;
- (ii) that a progress update on the Leadership and Development programme be submitted to this committee in April 2016.

11. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

S KANSAGRA
Vice Chair, in the Chair