

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES** held on Thursday, 28 September 2023 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

PRESENT

Councillor S Swann (in the Chair)

Councillors R Ashton, J Barron, R Ashton, J Dixon, M Foster, A Hayes, D Muller and D Murphy.

Officers in Attendance : John Cowings, Wes Downes, Sarah Eaton, Dally Pearson & Jen Skila

6/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

7/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Scrutiny Committee – Resources held on 11 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

Question from D Ingham:

A strategy priority is to create a diverse workforce. A strategy review aim is to better engage senior leaders on EDI development. In relation to Elected Members part of this important work will clearly flow from the motion raised by Councillor Ramsey.

In relation to officers I note statistics regarding the Councils workforce composition of grade 14 posts and above, but it doesn't detail by all protected groups. A composition of 1665 new starters is provided, but provides no details of total applications/ unsuccessful applications received from protected groups.

Although the Councils published pay data for those earning over £50000 as at 01-04-23 (under the Transparency Code) reports 228 employees, within the Pre-Audit Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 presented to Audit Committee 306 employees were reported.

Using the lower static figure of 228 and lowest salary range, there has been an investment of at least £11.5 million (not including on-costs) in senior officer leaders. Given the vacancy freeze what's the current number of these senior leaders and if known what's their percentage composition from each protected group e.g. BME or disabled who in turn can positively help shape the EDI refresh through the proposed engagement strategy?

Response :

The current number of leaders with a full-time equivalent salary over £50,000 is 288. Employees are encouraged to state their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion, but this is not a mandatory request. Of the above leadership population, the following demographics that can be provided are as follows:

- 64% female
- 2.1% black and minority ethnic
- 3.5% disabled
- 2.3% lesbian, gay or bisexual
- 44% of Christian faith
- 1% of other religious faiths.

Supplementary Question

It states within 2.14 of the EDI report - consider what constitutes feasible action in relation to the make-up of the workforce, given the current challenges within the job market and the rate of change which can be achieved, even with positive action initiatives in place

Given the vacancy freeze protected groups will find it harder to secure a Council appointment, the largest employer in Derbyshire and as suggested existing employees will continue to leave.

I wonder what type of metric analysis has been undertaken - for example on:-

The points raised within my original question regarding measurement of unsuccessful applications

Composition splits between BME groups e.g Asian or Black and geographic, job and grade disbursement.

Welcome, retention and recommend a friend payments. For example if a disabled employee recommends a disabled friend to apply what's the probability of appointment compared to non-disabled.

So if any such types of analysis has been done can it be shared today when the EDI report is discussed, or if not can it be fed into the EDI strategy refresh before significant decisions are made regarding what constitutes feasible action/acceptability levels concerning the diversity of the Councils workforce going forwards?

Response:

We are continually looking at all matters relating to the workforce and this will be considered in the refresh of the strategy moving forward.

9/23 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND REFRESH OF THE STRATEGY

Sarah Eaton, Assistant Director, Strategy & Policy, and Sally Pearson, Head of Learning and Development, attended the meeting and provided members with a presentation to compliment the report on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Progress for 2022/23, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and to present and outline proposals and timescales for the refresh of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The Council's current Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was previously discussed by Resources Committee on 3 March 2022 prior to adoption by Cabinet on 10 March 2022. At its meeting on 3 March 2022, it was agreed that an annual progress report would be brought back to the Committee for discussion and consideration.

The Council's EDI Strategy 2022-2025, set out the Council's vision and values for equality, diversity and inclusion identifying five key priorities to focus future effort across the authority:

- Create a diverse and confident workforce
- Ensure fair access to employment, skills, and business support
- Engaged communities able to influence decisions
- Healthy and supported people
- Safe and inclusive places for everyone

The Strategy contains a Delivery Plan consisting of a number of one, two and three-year deliverables and a number of success measures to monitor progress. A workstream for each of the five key priorities was established and identified Lead Officers meet regularly.

As set out in the Strategy, progress against the measures and deliverables in the EDI Strategy is considered on a six-monthly basis by the EDI Board and Corporate Management Team. The report provided an end of year update on progress made during the implementation of the Strategy in its first year. The focus of the current update was on the additional activity undertaken between April 2022 – March 2023 against the identified actions contained in the Strategy for completion by end of year.

Generally, as outlined in the annual report attached at Appendix 2 to the report for consideration, positive progress has been made against deliverables identified for completion during year one against all five priorities.

Despite good progress there had been a number of challenges across a number of workstreams as follows:

- Number of deliverables relating to health inequalities unrealistic in light of other health and social care challenges arising from pandemic
- Need to encourage inclusion of activity in respect of Childrens Service and Adult Care deliverables outlined in other strategies
- Priorities for employment and skills difficult to deliver due to disparate nature of work across organisation
- Disability Employment Strategy, which forms key part of workstream, delayed

A timetable had been developed for refreshing the EDI Strategy to ensure improved synergy with Council Plan objectives and to respond to the changes affecting the Council and its communities, with the aim of completing and adopting a new strategy by May 2024. It was proposed that the new Strategy will then run until the end of March 2027 with an annual review taking place each year to reflect key developments.

The review of the Strategy will commence in September 2023 with the aim to:

- Redefine the organisation's vision and priorities in relation to EDI, both internally and externally, and when considering the organisation's statutory obligations and organisation culture.
- Include an updated context following the release of the Census 2021 providing a more recent and detailed picture of diversity across the Derbyshire population
- Review the workstreams approach and ascertain whether they remain relevant, along with the "deliverables" or individual actions outlined for the remaining two years
- Aligned to the above, clarify which elements of employment and skills related activity should be prioritised for inclusion in the EDI Strategy
- Capture key developments in Adult Social Care, Childrens Services, Modern Ways of Working and the introduction of the Council's new

transformation approach

- Consider what constitutes feasible action in relation to the make-up of the workforce, given the current challenges within the job market and the rate of change which can be achieved, even with positive action initiatives in place
- Reflect upon, and support, activities which will support people struggling with the Cost-of-Living pressures
- Highlight any challenges with regard to resources and/or the -delivery of the approach across the authority
- Better engage senior leaders and Elected Members from all parties on EDI developments and the ongoing development of the strategy over the coming period
- Engage service departments more effectively in the ongoing delivery of the strategy.

Details were given of how the engagement process would take place with leaders and departments and internal and external consultation was also planned so that a final draft could be presented for consideration by Cabinet in May 2024.

Members made a number of observations and asked questions which were duly noted or answered by officers and would be included as part of the refresh moving forward

RESOLVED to note the report and the annual EDI progress report attached at Appendix 2.

SARAH EATON

The Chair informed members that Sarah Eaton would be leaving the Authority shortly and on behalf of the Committee wished to place on record his thanks and appreciation for all her hard work and commitment over the years and wished her all the best for the future.

