

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 25 JUNE 2015

Present:

Councillors Livingston (for Cllr Page), Lovelock and Steele	
Ms J Boyd	National Union of Teachers (NUT)
Mr R Hall	Unison
Mr R Kiff	Unison
Mr J Magee	Unite
Mr P Narancic	Unison
Mr W King	Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager
Mr R Morris	HR Partner
Ms S Poole	Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillors Gavin and Page

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Kieran Magee was elected to serve as Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2015/2016.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Lovelock had been appointed to serve as Vice Chair at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 27 May 2015 (Minute 11 refers).

3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2015

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 3 February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 3, Joan Boyd reported that there had been revised guidelines from the Department for Education (DfE) that stated that it was not necessary to ask employees to complete a form to declare anything that could make them 'disqualified by association' from working with children and suggested that there were other, less intrusive ways to obtain this information.

AGREED: That methods of obtaining disclosure information be discussed with Kirsty Bennett.

4. DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - GENERAL UPDATE AND BUSINESS DISABILITY FORUM

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report updating the Forum on the work that was being undertaken to review and update the Council's policies, procedures and practical support to employees and prospective employees with a disability. This work was being undertaken by a working group led by Roger Morris and with the active support and engagement of members of the JTUC (Joint Trade Union Committee). The group had agreed a series of areas for development and the report outlined the planned work and progress against each area.

The report stated that in addition to the work of the employment group, the Council's recruitment and selection procedures (and related admin processes) had been amended to ensure that managers who were recruiting to posts established at the outset the minimum

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requirements of the post prior to advertisement. This underpinned the Council's '2 Tick' commitment to ensuring that all candidates with a disability were interviewed if they met the minimum requirements.

Business Disability Forum

The report stated that the Business Disability Forum (BDF) was a not-for-profit member organisation that made it easier and more rewarding to work with and employ disabled people. BDF sought to remove the barriers between employers and disabled people and provided members with pragmatic support by sharing expertise and offering advice and training.

The report explained that BDF had also produced a 'Disability Standard' which provided organisations with examples, based on 10 criteria, of what 'Good' looked like across business functions including recruitment and retention, communications and facilities management.

The report outlined the benefits of the Council becoming a member of the BDF, including the opportunity of support to undertake a self-assessment and benchmark the Council's policies and procedures against the Disability Standard as well as the on-line and telephone support available from their Information and Advice Service.

It was agreed that this work would have to link with, and complement, the opportunities for young disabled people that the Council had already committed to do through City Deal and Project Search.

AGREED: That the report and the proposal to join the Business Disability Forum be noted.

5. EQUALITY AUDIT 2014/15

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report to provide the Forum with a statistical summary of the equal opportunities monitoring under the Council's Equality Monitoring Framework for the financial year 2014/15. The tables were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

He explained that the report was a component of the Council's Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy and would be presented annually in the form set out in the Equality Monitoring Framework and provided background data that would assist and inform the work of the Forum.

The report stated that the framework contained key employment profiles which the Council had to measure by law and also included other profile data based on previous national performance indicators (PIs) outturns where relevant. In addition, data from the report would assist each directorate in setting its own targets based on their clients, customers or service users.

The report explained that the agreed framework reporting heads were:

- All Council Staff by directorate, gender, ethnic origin and disability;
- All Council Staff by gender, ethnic origin and disability across salary bands;

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- Proportion of female, BME and disabled job applicants;
- Female, BME and disabled applicants as a proportion of their relative cohorts, who progress to through shortlisting to appointment compared with male, white and non-disabled applicants;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees accessing Council training by directorate, training type, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees involved in Council procedures, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Staff turnover data analysed by gender and ethnicity.

The statistical summary for each of these areas was detailed in Appendix 1 and the report highlighted the following points:

- The proportion of women employed by the Council had remained static at 78.7%, with 92% in schools but only 50.1% in the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services (DENS);
- The proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff had increased from 13.7% to 14.7%, but this was in comparison to a 23% BME economically active population within the Borough;
- The proportion of employees who had declared a disability had increased from 1.8% to 2.6% but this was in comparison to a 6% economically active population within the Borough;
- In 2014/15 there had been 5774 applications for 396 appointments, compared with 4420 applications for 306 appointments in 2013/14. Of the applications in 2014/15, 60% were from women, 27% from BME applicants and 4% from people with a declared disability.

The tables also showed comparisons of gender, ethnicity and disability across salary bands and this indicated that there were at least 55% female employees in all salary bands except for band 1 (which consisted mainly of apprentices). The overall number of employees who had declared a disability was relatively even across most of the bands with the exception of band 10. The level of BME employees in the higher earnings bands had remained static since 2011 and with only 5% in the highest band, which was lower than the proportion of BME employees in the Council as a whole.

Joan Boyd added that the NUT had reported that there was some evidence that BME employees and part-time employees (who were predominantly women) were less likely to progress under the new performance related pay in schools.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report be noted:

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- (2) That equality information be collected in relation to performance related pay in schools;
- (3) That equality information be benchmarked against other councils and the results reported to a future meeting of the Forum.

6. AMENDMENTS TO RECRUITMENT AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS GUIDE

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report to update the Forum on amendments that had been made to the Recruitment and Pre-Employment Checks Guide - Posts with Access to Children and Vulnerable Adults, to bring it into line with legal requirements and best practice within the Council. A copy of the revised Guide was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the Council's recruitment policy had been updated in 2007 following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on safer recruitment practices in schools and education settings. The principles contained within that guidance were adopted by the Council for recruitment across the wider range of posts with access to vulnerable groups. The policy had now being revised to address the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, and the inclusion of specific handling of references in Children's Services.

The report explained that the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations required that anyone working in a childcare setting was asked to declare if they were disqualified from such work through having an order or other restriction against them in relation to childcare, having committed certain offences, and/or living with another person in their household to whom such a disqualification applied ('by association'). It was noted that since these new regulations had been applied, one member of staff had successfully applied for a waiver, three had been redeployed and one had resigned.

The other new procedure that had been added to the policy was that recruiting managers in Children's Services were required to confirm that references supplied for candidates were double checked with the referee to ensure they were genuine.

In conclusion the report stated that the updated policy set out a recruitment procedure that met guidance from the DfE to support safer recruitment and would satisfy the expectations of external inspection bodies such as Ofsted.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.30 pm).