



Title	Update on RBC's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Plan
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Assistant Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Emberson
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	That Personnel Committee notes the progress that has been made in relation to the delivery of the Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Personnel Committee agreed the draft Inclusion and Diversity Strategy at its meeting on 16th November 2023. The Committee's comments and feedback were reflected in the final version of the Strategy which was launched to staff in January 2024 and is attached at Appendix 1 for information. This report provides the annual update (year 2 progress) to Personnel Committee on delivery of the Strategy as requested by the Committee at its meeting in November 2023.

2. Policy Context

2.1. The Equality Act 2010 is the foundational legal framework to protect individuals' rights and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act outlines key legal responsibilities for employers including ensuring they do not unfairly discriminate in any aspect of work, do all they reasonably can to protect people from discrimination, and look after the wellbeing of employees. The Act introduced the term "protected characteristics" to refer to groups that are protected under the Act. There are 9 Protected characteristics as follows:

Age	Race	Sex
Sexual orientation	Marriage/civil partnership	Disability
Gender reassignment	Religion or belief	Maternity and paternity

2.2. In addition to the duties required by legislation, Council agreed on 17th October 2023 that RBC should include care-experience as a Protected Characteristic in its strategies and plans.

2.3. The Public Sector Equality Duty (created under the Equality Act 2010) came into force on 5 April 2011 and requires public bodies and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations between different communities.

2.4. The Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy goes beyond 'just' our legal obligations. It aims to embed Inclusion and Diversity in how we do business and how we work as an organisation.

3. Progress in delivering the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy – year 2 actions

3.1. Reading is a diverse and vibrant place with pockets of affluence and deprivation. We know that most of the people who work for us are local. Approximately half of our workforce (54%) lives in the borough and a further 33% have an RG postcode (87% total). We want Reading Borough Council to have a workforce that reflects and understands the communities it serves and to be seen as an employer of choice within our communities; one that values inclusion and diversity, and the different perspectives they bring.

3.2. Progress has been made since the launch of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy including:

- A steady increase in the ethnic diversity of staff and the development of a more representative senior leadership team. This has seen the overall proportion of staff from a non-white ethnic group increase to 19.6% (Sept 2025) from a baseline of 15.9% in 2022/23. The TUPE of Brighter Futures for Children back into RBC (as the new DOCs service) will require that we reprofile the Council's position. Future reports will include DOCs data and the action plans will similarly be applied to this service.
- Launch of the "Reverse Mentoring for Inclusion" pilot programme with five members of our Corporate Management Team being mentored, for six months, by a more junior employee with a different lived experience to them, to increase understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics).
- Publication of our pay gap reports and action plans including the gender pay gap report, our voluntary ethnicity pay gap report and our voluntary disability pay gap report. Personnel Committee is receiving a separate report at the meeting on pay gap reporting – overall we are proud to be presenting a positive outcome on all three pay gap reports.
- Produced an anti-racism statement and action plan for 2025 – Appendix 2. The statement has had the benefit of input from staff groups and will be communicated widely shortly. Meanwhile the actions in the plan are being progressed. These actions include:
 - Regular updates on our work on inclusion and diversity generally and anti racism specifically including at All staff Briefings and Team Talk and at Staff networks
 - Increasing the visibility of inclusion activities including Black History month
 - Support for the new Race in Reading staff group including Team Talk and encouragement to people managers to both get involved in staff groups and to support their team members to be involved in them
 - Introducing a tracking mechanism in HR to track and monitor cases of discrimination related grievances and to enable lessons to be learnt
 - Piloting anti racism training, ensuring all staff understand their roles and responsibilities. The initial pilot has been positively received and will be rolled out – initially to people managers – through 2026.
 - Continuing with the year 1 priority to increase the visibility of diverse communities in our communications including recruitment
- CMT continues to take a very active interest in the work to improve how well the Council's workforce reflects the composition of the Borough – a further update on

the Global Majority action plan, focused on understanding the experiences of employees and making positive improvements to policies and processes in response to this learning, will be considered by CMT in the new calendar year.

Please note the comments in paragraph 3.4 below about feedback from the Black and Asian Councillors Group about the need for a Borough-wide statement on anti-racism which will be taken forward shortly.

- Launch of an Inclusive Recruitment workshop, guide and interview questions for hiring managers. This covers legal implications, processes, support, unconscious bias, and reasonable adjustment.
- Continued delivery of our Inclusive leadership training for leaders and managers. Feedback from attendees remains positive.
- A career and personal development workshop to assist staff who wish to develop in their current roles or progress to more senior positions within the Council.
- Access for all staff to Inclusive Employers' free webinars -regular newsletter promotion (10 free places on each webinar as part of corporate membership).
- Work has been completed to develop Health 'passports' (a statement about the reasonable adjustments required to support individual staff members to ensure that their needs are recorded consistently and to ensure that staff members in receipt of them are not required to restate continually their requirements). This is currently being tested by Staff Disability Forum members ahead of launch.
- Updating our four core HR policies: Bullying & Harassment, Disciplinary, Grievance and Managing Poor Performance to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice.
- Focused attention to recruit care-experienced people to roles including apprenticeships.

Further details are shown at appendix 3.

3.3 Progress is shared quarterly with all staff through a supporting comms campaign. CMT members chair, on a rotation basis, a quarterly meeting with Staff Networks chairs as part of the governance of the strategy.

3.4 Meetings have been held with Members over the past 18 months about the Council's strategy for inclusion and diversity for its workforce. A keen interest has been shown into the proposed anti racism statement. Whist the statement at Appendix 2 relates to the Council's workforce, Members are also being engaged with in working towards a broader, Borough-wide public statement.

3.5 Progress has also been made with the agreed milestones for the Inclusion & Diversity strategy:

Continue to monitor representation across the whole workforce across numerous identities to identify any inconsistencies/ areas for focus.	Workforce data is part of quarterly performance reports to CMT. This is reviewed by HR & OD to identify areas of focus. For year 2 a working group has reviewed data related to Global majority employees.
Continue to monitor feedback from candidates about the application and interview processes – identifying ways in which we can improve.	Feedback is sought from candidates and regularly reviewed to identify improvements. Feedback is generally very positive with commendations being made about the speed and

	efficiency of the process and the focus given to 'candidate care'.
Monitor turnover across the whole workforce and particular identities (including disabled) to identify any specific areas of concern.	Workforce data is part of quarterly performance reports to CMT. This is reviewed by HR & OD to identify areas of focus. HR&OD Business Partners work with this data to understand where to focus attention e.g. through analysis of sickness absence or recruitment data
Staff survey scores from disabled colleagues to 'match' those of non-disabled colleagues	Next staff survey due to launch on 17 November.
Expect a 5% increase (minimum), currently 77%, in colleagues agreeing "The Council is an inclusive organisation where everyone is respected and valued" on the next engagement survey about the importance of I&D by the end of 2025.	2024 result: 79% 2025 survey due November
Deliver a 50% increase in number of colleagues who are part of a staff network by year 2	Achieved. New networks in year 1 & 2 include Race in Reading, Men's wellbeing circle, Digital Champions and Change Makers Network
By the 2025 staff survey we will expect a 5% (minimum), currently 57%, increase in colleagues trusting senior leadership (question: "Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive")	2024 staff survey result: same 2025 survey due in November
Deliver a 10% decrease in 'prefer not to say' / not stated across all identities for new joiners and existing staff by the end of 2025	We are seeing a reduction in non-disclosure rates - full review to be undertaken in early 2026. Proposed to seek Union support to work jointly on a campaign of disclosure.
Ensure all core HR policies – including the I&D strategy - are produced in 'easy read' format	Easy read formats created for launch post finalising of four core policies
Team Reading values are updated and integrated into the start of the 24/25 performance annual appraisal year.	Completed 2024
Expect that 20% (345 as at 30/9/23 headcount) of colleagues engage with I&D training/ comms and engagement events and comms by end of year 1	On track for achievement events including training workshops-Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Recruitment, Inclusion & Diversity webinars and staff network events.
All line managers undergo the allyship training programme by the end of years 1, 2, 3	In progress -aim for by end of March 2025 likely end of year 3 strategy.

4. Taking this forward

4.1 The priorities for the third year of the Plan (starting January 2026) are set out in detail in Appendix 4. The priorities listed address areas that are felt still to require attention to ensure the delivery of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. They include:

- **Communications campaign for the Anti Racism statement and continuing to progress the agreed actions** including supporting training sessions to understand individual responsibilities to support the Council being an Anti-Racist organisation.

NB This work incorporates the 'Global Majority Action Plan' which drives the work to achieve the targets in the Council Plan through the underlying cross organisational activity aimed toward improving Global Majority representation throughout the employee lifecycle, and at all levels of the organisation.

- **Develop and roll out a series of Inclusion & Diversity workshops** e.g. Understanding Neurodiversity and hidden disabilities
- **Support for progression** –continue to deliver tailored progression workshops, and evaluate the impact of initiatives that may have an effect on progression such as the Reverse Mentoring programme.
- **Continue delivery of Inclusive Leadership workshop** to all people managers as a mandatory training session.
- **Policy review** –continue review of policies with the broad lens of inclusion – importantly this will include, but not be limited to, changes required as a result of the Employment Rights Bill (when enacted) as well as the EHRC guidance following the Supreme Court's judgement on the definition of a woman (when available).
- **Disability Inclusion** continue to ensure we are delivering our Level 2 Disability Confident status and aim for Level 3 Disability Confident leader status. We will also consider whether an additional statement and/or actions are required to support work in this area.

4.2 Staff Networks, organisational leaders, and Team Reading Stakeholders have been asked to comment on any further priority areas that will support achievement of our ambition for Inclusion & Diversity during year 3 of the strategy. So far feedback includes a focus on Disability Inclusion (invisible disabilities such as neurodiversity, epilepsy, narcolepsy), Carers – unpaid or family carers and Menopause. These will be considered as part of the year 3 delivery

5. Conclusion

Personnel Committee is invited to note the progress during year two (2025) of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy, the additional Anti-racism actions and comment on any further areas they believe should also be considered as a priority for year 3.

6. Contribution to Strategic Aims

6.1. The inclusion and diversity agenda has evolved significantly over the last 30 years and continues to evolve. As a Council we need to not only ensure compliance with legislation but also to respond to changing societal expectations and norms.

6.2. Our staff are responsible for delivering high quality services to residents and it is important that every member of staff feels able to deliver their best work – feeling included and valued is an important aspect of this. The Council's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and associated Action Plan aims to ensure the Council's workforce better reflects the residents of the Borough and, although focussed internally, contributes to the Council Plan themes of 'Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future' and 'Promote more equal communities in Reading'. It is also an important aspect of Team Reading Values e.g. 'We work together as one inclusive team with colleagues and partners to deliver great services'.

7. Environmental and Climate Implications

There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this paper.

8. Community Engagement

Not relevant for this report.

9. Equality Implications

- 9.1. The Strategy and Action Plan are directly related to the Council's responsibilities as an employer. It seeks to put inclusion and diversity at the heart of not only our people management practices and policies but also more generally in how staff engage with each other e.g. through reflecting its themes and priorities in our Team Reading values. Through close monitoring of our performance in relation to all aspects of the Strategy we will track progress in relation to all 'protected characteristics' as well as wider measures of inclusion and diversity.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision given that the aim of the Strategy is to address issues relating to the equality and inclusion of everyone who works for the Council.

10. Other Relevant Considerations

This report proposes actions that impact on existing HR&OD policies and processes. As the Strategy is delivered, policies and processes are being systematically worked through and agreed with the trades unions prior to being considered by Policy/Personnel Committee as relevant.

11. Legal Implications

None – this proposal is to meet and to overachieve the requirements in legislation.

12. Financial Implications

The proposals in this report are being met from existing budgets

13. Timetable for Implementation

This is a three-year strategy – this update provides the Committee with a progress report on year two of the Action Plan.

14. Background Papers

There are none.

Appendices

- 1. Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-26**
- 2. Anti racism statement and actions for 2025**
- 3. Inclusion and diversity year two plan update**
- 4. Inclusion and diversity year 3 delivery plan proposal**



Reading Borough Council

**Inclusion and
Diversity Strategy
January 2024-
December 2026**

Our ambition: An inclusive culture where we can all do our best work and can thrive.

To achieve this ambition we will:

- Create a structured I & D Action Plan that moves us from being judged 'programmatic' to 'embedded' in the Inclusive Employers Inclusion maturity model by the end of 2026 and report on progress regularly to staff.
- Identify relevant external memberships that will help us to keep track of best practice e.g., the Business Disability Forum /Inclusive Employers
- Create a governance structure to oversee progress.
- Value inclusion and diversity to support staff wellbeing and create a positive and supportive culture where people feel able to be themselves.
- Develop the skills, knowledge, and talent of our people so that they fulfil their full potential and uphold our inclusive culture.
- Prioritise the creation of both an anti-racist statement for the Council and a disabled 'charter' in the first year of the plan – reviewing the need for proactive measures to support people with other protected characteristics during the life of the plan.

We will focus on the following areas over the next three years:

To support our ambitions, we will...

Review and develop our ambition statement through consideration of the unique lived experiences of different sectors of society:

- As a first step we will think carefully about what it means for RBC to be an antiracist organisation. Taking input from staff, stakeholders and members and from external best practice we will develop a clear and ambitious plan to deliver it.
- We will develop a similar approach to disability in its widest sense (including neurodiversity and mental health), developing strategies to better support this significantly under-represented group in our workforce.
- During the life of the Action Plan we will regularly review progress in relation to all protected characteristics, developing enabling ambition statements as required.

Develop our approach to Inclusive Recruitment:

- Promote diversifying shortlisting and interviewing.
- Create standardised I&D questions to weave into the recruitment process across all jobs (in interview and/or application)
- Promote flexible working options at advert and appointment.
- Ensure external agencies understand our I&D ambitions e.g., when sourcing candidates

- Review our approach to interviews and assessment centres e.g., to enable neuro diverse applicants to perform at their best.
- Use work experience and apprenticeships to support our ambition.

We will improve on our Disability Confident offering:

- Upskill internal HR/Recruitment Team to promote and encourage Inclusive recruitment practices.
- With members of the Staff Disability Forum ensure we focus on the internal experiences of disabled colleagues making sure they have resources and support to succeed in their role
- Provide support to candidates who say they are disabled.
- We will diversify where we promote our available jobs to reach all communities locally.

We will develop a programme of support for all staff seeking career progression.

- Review feedback from the big Conversation and other sources and engage with focus groups to understand better what current support is of value and what needs to be developed.
- Review our current Leadership Development programme pilot with this feedback in mind.
- Develop further variety in the ways the Council supports career progression including developing success plans.

To understand if the above actions are working, we will:

- Continue to monitor representation across the whole workforce across numerous identities to identify any inconsistencies/ areas for focus.
- Continue to monitor feedback from candidates about the application and interview processes – identifying ways in which we can improve.
- Monitor turnover across the whole workforce and particular identities (including disabled) to identify any specific areas of concern.
- Staff survey scores from disabled colleagues to ‘match’ those of non-disabled colleagues

We want Inclusion and diversity to be at the forefront of all our colleagues minds from the work they deliver, management, and team interactions

To support our ambitions, we will...

Launch this Strategy and Action Plan across the workforce so everyone understands the importance and the part they play.

- We'll run staff sessions to explain the Strategy, Action Plan, and language/terminology used.
- To bring all Inclusion & Diversity work together, we'll make an I&D brand to bring unity to the work delivered over the next 2 years and beyond
- We'll update colleagues quarterly on progress.

Develop a robust structure and support for current and upcoming staff networks to build community, trust and diversify feedback

- Set our networks up for success by giving them terms of reference, network running guidance (including membership and meeting structures) and develop a clear communications pathway from networks to the CEO so that concerns and comments can be raised.
- Consider introducing 'protected time' for involvement in staff networks and groups.

People Managers will undergo a series of continuous learning

- Senior leadership to take part in a series of training e.g., Inclusive Leadership to understand a variety of identities to role model inclusive decision making
- Roll out allyship training.
- A reverse mentoring programme will be launched to support understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics)

To understand if our actions above are working, we will:

- Expect a 5% increase (minimum), currently 77%, in colleagues agreeing "The Council is an inclusive organisation where everyone is respected and valued" on the next engagement survey about the importance of I&D by the end of 2025.
- Deliver a 50% increase in number of colleagues who are part of a staff network by year 2
- By the 2025 staff survey we will expect a 5% (minimum), currently 57%, increase in colleagues trusting senior leadership (question: "Leadership by the Senior Leaders is positive and supportive")

We want all colleagues to have an inclusive and fair experience whilst at work which helps them thrive.

To support our ambitions, we will...

Review all the Council's HR policies to support and include a broad spectrum of identities and experiences to build a healthy workplace

- We will revise all policies with the wider lens of Inclusion and intersectionality beyond protected characteristics (including socio and economic status)
- We'll introduce gender neutral language throughout all policies (especially menopause, parental/adoption)
- We will work with our networks to make sure a wide range of voices review policies.
- We'll communicate all edited and existing policies so all council employees can access them and identify 'easy read' options

Review the Team Reading values to identify where we need to reflect I&D

- Our current values and supporting descriptions will be reviewed and adapted to ensure a clear statement on inclusion and diversity is included to reflect the importance of everyone's role in achieving our ambition "we want an inclusive culture where we can do our best work and can thrive".

Run an organisational-wide data review across the employee lifecycle to gather data to help us make inclusive and informed decisions.

- We will update all data questions to encompass all identities and backgrounds to help us make better decisions for our people. We will do this by collecting consistent data from job application, on boarding, engagement surveys and exit interviews)

- We will launch a data collection exercise across the Council to improve our understanding of our people.

Set line managers up for success to best support their colleagues.

- Upskill line managers to have meaningful conversations on areas of inclusion and diversity to help them understand the needs of their colleagues. This will enable them to discuss and support team members with reasonable adjustments and/or creating the conditions for them to thrive and do their best work in line with our Inclusion and Diversity ambitions.

To understand if the above actions are working, we will:

- Deliver a 10% decrease in 'prefer not to say' /not stated across all identities for new joiners and existing staff by the end of 2025
- Ensure all core HR policies – including the I&D strategy - are produced in 'easy read' format
- Team Reading values are updated and integrated into the start of the 24/25 performance annual appraisal year.

We want to celebrate diversity in our workforce and empower our colleagues to speak up when they see or experience exclusion.

To support our ambitions, we will...

Design an annual plan of Diversity dates and identities to celebrate through communications, events and training:

- Working with our staff groups we will focus on key diversity dates throughout the year to celebrate and raise awareness, making sure they diversify across a variety of identities (sexuality, disability, faith and more)

We will run a cohesive Allyship Training Programme to encourage unity, connection, and solidarity across all identities – so we can all make a positive culture.

- This training programme will encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies.
- It will explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally.

To understand if our actions are working, we will:

- Expect that 20% (345 as at 30/9/23 headcount) of colleagues engage with I&D training/ comms and engagement events and comms by end of year 1
- All line managers undergo the allyship training programme by the end of years 1, 2, 3

Delivering the Strategy

To implement this Strategy and to ensure its delivery, strong governance will be essential. The following governance and support arrangements will be established:

- A short-term steering group will be set up to have oversight of the strategy and delivery plan – led by the Chief Executive
- Each Directorate will be supported to consider their own action-planning based on the strategy – including via the next service planning round.

- Progress will be monitored and reported through Team Reading Delivery Team & Board and Corporate Management Team and to Personnel Committee
- A communications and engagement plan will be developed to accompany the strategy and for this to be updated at review points.

CONCLUSION

&D is not only a 'good thing' in which to invest, but also an organisational imperative. This Strategy and Action Plan provide RBC with a blueprint for how to become more inclusive and diverse and over a concentrated timespan of three years. We will review the Strategy in early 2026. There will always be more that we can do.

Anti Racism Statement and actions for 2025

Reading is a diverse and vibrant place, and the council is committed to reflecting that diversity in its workforce, celebrating, and encouraging difference. This diversity of backgrounds and experiences enriches what we do.

In 2020 the Council signed Business in the Community's [Race at Work](#) charter. In 2023 we had an organisation wide "Big Conversation" on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which led to the launch of the Inclusion and Diversity strategy in January 2024.

This strategy included the ambition to create "An inclusive culture where we can all do our best work and can thrive". It also includes a commitment to explore what it means to be an anti-racist organisation.

Why it matters that we take an anti-racist approach

We recognise that it is no longer enough for us to tackle inequalities and be non-racist and that we must be actively anti-racist.

We are committed to achieving racial equality because we recognise that persistent racial inequalities are unfair and unacceptable. We are committed to putting anti-racist practices into our structures, systems, and processes.

We recognise that policies, behaviours, and rules etc. can result in a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

We know that some groups are more likely to face inequality, experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty. We understand that racism can be embedded within the structures and systems of a society.

There is legislation to protect against overt racism, but much racism is more subtle and covert, for example prejudice, assumptions, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping. Where these remain unchallenged, they continue to impact the experiences of many people.

We recognise the important role our employees play in making Reading BC an anti-racist organisation. The services we develop and deliver will be stronger because of the diversity of the lived experiences of our staff. We do this by living our Team Reading values – recently revised to strengthen our commitment to inclusion and diversity:

- We work together as one inclusive team with colleagues and partners to deliver great services.
- We drive efficiency and value for money in everything we do.
- We are ambitious in our plans and in what we want to achieve
- We are here to make a positive difference to all residents, our diverse communities, and the businesses of Reading.

Our commitments:

Employee voice

- We will hold focus groups with our employees to discuss anti-racism and learn where we need to make improvements.
- We will create the conditions for these discussions to be held in a respectful and safe way.
- We will consider how other areas of diversity (including intersectionality) compound the experiences of our employees.

- We will develop an anti-racism action plan informed by these discussions to address areas for improvements.

Employee support

- We will work to ensure that our staff and managers have the required support via training, policies, and resources to manage and report racism and racist incidents.
- We will provide support for those who have experienced or observed racism and ensure we learn from this.
- We will support our employees to proactively and continuously understand and take action when racism, however subtle, impacts decision making.

Accountability

- We have a zero tolerance to racism throughout the organisation and take action when behaviours do not support our commitment.
- We will regularly monitor progress of the supporting action plan, once created, and its impact towards being an anti-racist organisation.
- As we review our policies, procedures, and services we will ensure they are inclusive, equitable and anti-racist.
- We commit to sharing this statement with our partners and potential partners; to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them to both understand and align with our commitment.

Our Corporate Management Team commit to sponsoring this work to ensure we achieve our ambition of being an anti-racist organisation.

ANTI RACISM ACTIONS

Year 2 delivery plan areas

1. Building Trust and Engagement	Progress	Comment
<p>Proactive Leadership Communication:</p> <p>Regular updates from senior leaders about progress on anti-racism initiatives e.g. Team Talk , ASB, staff group updates</p>	Underway	<p>Anti Racism training discussed in comms and qtly Chairs meeting</p> <p>More focussed campaigns to start on launch of statement</p>
<p>Enhanced Promotion of Inclusion Activities:</p> <p>Increase visibility of diversity events through varied channels, ensuring managers actively encourage participation.</p>	Completed	<p>Staff network events in 2025 International Women's Day and Pride</p> <p>Planned events for Black History</p>

		month and Christmas
Safe Dialogue Spaces: Continue to establish dedicated, facilitated forums where employees feel empowered to share experiences in psychologically safe spaces including staff group forums and employee voice sessions to support Inclusion and Diversity delivery areas	Ongoing	New staff networks in 2025 Race in Reading, Men's Wellbeing Circle, Digital Champions & Change Makers
2. Leadership Development and Representation		
Mentorship Programmes: A reverse mentoring programme pilot with SLG volunteers will be launched to support understanding and unity across all colleagues (starting with protected characteristics)	Underway	Five CMT members part of pilot programme
Leadership Diversity: Increase visibility of diverse leadership team and consider increasing representation in middle management roles through recruitment, promotion, and professional development.	Ongoing	Supported by wider year 2 actions
3. Policy and Accountability Strengthening		
Policy Implementation: Review and enhance anti-racism policies, incorporating clear measures of success and accountability frameworks. Ensure they are communicated and accessible to the whole organisation.	Ongoing	Four core policies being reviewed with broad lens of inclusion as a focus
Resourcing HR: Ensure effective tracking and monitoring of HR cases of discrimination related grievances to enable lessons learnt and shape year 3 Inclusion and Diversity actions	Underway	Updated process/system for case monitoring
Training: Deliver practical, anti-racism training for all staff, ensuring applicability to their roles and responsibilities.	Underway	Pilot sessions planned for November ahead of launch to all staff
4. Embedding Diversity into Culture		
Annual Diversity Calendar: Establish and share a council-wide calendar celebrating diverse cultural events, with visible leadership participation.	Completed	Calendar shared with all staff Leaders encouraged to join networks and events

Team-Level Initiatives: Encourage teams to include cultural elements (e.g., food, storytelling) in meetings to promote learning and connection supported by staff groups	Completed	Staff members encouraged to join networks and events
Visual Representation: Increase visibility of diverse communities in internal and external council communications.	Completed	In year 1 internet updated including recruitment pages
5. Supporting Frontline Staff		
Tailored Guidance: Develop guidance in existing training materials for frontline staff to handle racist behaviours from the public confidently and safely.	Completed	Zero Tolerance policy and comms campaign Speaking up regular comms to staff Managers Team Talk discussions
6. Sustaining Systemic Change		
Employee-Led Networks: Provide resources and autonomy to employee networks/groups focused on diversity, enabling them to influence meaningful change.	Completed & Ongoing	Quarterly Staff Chairs meetings
Regular Progress Reports: Establish a transparent reporting mechanism to share updates on inclusion efforts with employees (including frontline) and the wider community.	Completed	Quarterly Staff Network Chairs meetings Quarterly all staff comms campaigns

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY YEAR 2 PLAN UPDATE

This includes actions previously updated as not started/underway in the annual Committee update (November 2024) and year 2 actions

Review and develop our Inclusion and Diversity strategy through consideration of the unique, lived experiences of employees with different protected characteristics:		
Anti racist statement and actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of anti-racist action plan• Launch of anti-racist statement and updated actions	Status: Completed In progress	Comments: Actions agreed with CMT in January 2025 progress shown in Appendix 2
Disability statement and actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of our disability statement• Development of actions Launch of our disability statement	Not started	This will be reviewed as part of the Council's Disability Confident level 2 re accreditation in 2025 Actions related to Disability inclusion include development of Health & Inclusion passport currently being tested ahead of launch
Allyship training: Note Inclusive Leadership workshop includes allyship		
Run a programme of allyship training.	Ongoing	Ongoing action through strategy three years with CMT focus on completion by end of year 2 So far circa 150 people have attended the workshop (120 people managers) with 42 people due to attend by end of 2025 Remaining managers will attend in 2026
Recruitment		
Target improved representation across whole workforce including leadership and management	Ongoing	Workforce data reviewed related to GM in line with Council plan targets Focus on recruitment process reviews for service areas who have lower representation
Target for global majority new starters to match composition of the Borough over time	Ongoing	Year 3 target – progress reporting in monthly Performance report
Monitor any further positive action to reduce ethnicity and gender pay gaps	Completed	We do not have a gender pay gap in 2025

		We have a small positive ethnicity pay gap for some GM employees. Actions have been identified to address identified gaps.
Upskill colleagues who recruit on topics covering bias in recruitment, relevant laws, reasonable adjustments, and positive action	Ongoing	Pilot workshops delivered November 2024 Quarterly ongoing workshops delivered to hiring managers in 2025
Review current recruitment learning, develop further support required to meet I & D goals	Underway	Review completed Updated content will be launched by end of 2025
Design and launch an Inclusive Recruitment Guide to promote diversifying shortlisting and interviewing panels; create standardised I&D questions to weave into the recruitment process; promote flexible working options at advert and appointment	Completed	Guide and interview questions launched and promoted to all staff Regular delivery of Inclusive Recruitment training workshop
Evaluation of recruitment activity impacts-identify what next to build on in year 2	Completed	Focus on Global majority recruitment
<u>Celebrate and embrace difference:</u>		
Roll-out a programme that celebrates difference – linking to the diversity calendar <u>The Diversity and Inclusion Calendar 2023 Inclusive Employers</u> - diversity events/days to bring people together and help increase cultural understanding and create social inclusion	Complete	Staff network led and HR & OD supported Diversity calendar shared with all staff and comms on diversity calendar areas all year
Introduce a series of 'lunch & learns' to help demystify myths and common misconceptions and increase understanding on lived experiences.	Complete & ongoing	Inclusive Employer partnership membership webinars promoted to all staff So far employees have utilised 65 places in 2025. The Council receive 10 free places to webinars on Inclusion & Diversity topics throughout the year Mostly attended by HR & OD and Staff network members
Utilise existing networks to support this.	Complete & ongoing	Networks have arranged events including International Women's Day, Pride Planned events for Black History Month & Christmas
<u>Data review</u>		
Ensure all sources of identity data (and all questions/answers) are inclusive and consistent including:	Completed & ongoing	This is kept under ongoing review for recruitment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for roles, onboarding, exit interview, engagement survey, retention, sickness etc. (or make your data system can be used across all stages) 		<p>In 2025 diversity information has been added to exit surveys</p> <p>Regular comms campaigns throughout the year to all staff encouraging updating of diversity information on employee system has supported increases in disclosures</p>
Regularly review this data and build in additional actions to this plan as required.	Ongoing	
Share data and insights with staff groups.	Completed	Workforce data and pay gap reporting shared with Staff networks and all staff
<p>Support progression:</p> <p>Continue to deliver tailored progression workshops and support to enable mobility including to senior leadership roles</p>		
	Ongoing	Workshops Personal & career development ongoing delivery- toolkit - published and regular comms
<p>Allyship Training</p> <p>Continue programme of training that introduces allyship, discusses intersectionality and highlights identities/ communities that need ally support. Content to encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies and to explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally.</p>	Partially completed and ongoing	<p>So far circa 150 people have attended the workshop (120 people managers) with 42 people due to attend by end of 2025</p> <p>Remaining managers will attend in 2026</p>
<p>Policy review</p> <p>Continue review of policies with the broad lens of Inclusion and intersectionality and consider opportunities to move beyond protected characteristics (e.g. socio and economic status)</p>	Underway and ongoing	<p>Four HR policies being reviewed</p> <p>Bullying & harassment, Disciplinary, Grievance and Managing Poor Performance.</p>
Where appropriate introduce gender neutral language throughout all (especially menopause, parental/adoption)	Completed	Policies reviews include check on this
Utilise staff networks as a critical friend	Underway	Stakeholder involvement across Council as part of review
Develop 'easy to read' versions of key policies covering key information and contacts for further inquiry	Underway and ongoing	Drafted will be launched once above four policy reviews completed

Proposed INCLUSION & DIVERSITY YEAR 3 DELIVERY PLAN

Year 3

Develop and roll out the next series of I&D workshops e.g.

- Understanding Neurodiversity and hidden disabilities
- How to have an Active Bystander
- Using inclusive language

Support progression:

- Continue to deliver tailored progression workshops and support to enable mobility including to senior leadership roles

Allyship Training:

- Continue the programme of training and introduce a focus on allyship, discussions on intersectionality and highlighting identities / communities that need or will benefit from ally support. Content to encourage and empower colleagues to be active allies and to explore topics of inclusion, diversity and being an active ally

Policy review:

- Continue review of policies with the broad lens of Inclusion and intersectionality and consider opportunities to move beyond protected characteristics (eg socio and economic status)
- Where appropriate introduce gender neutral language throughout all policies (especially menopause, parental/adoption)
- Utilise staff networks as a critical friend
- Develop 'easy to read' versions of key policies covering key information and contacts for further inquiry

Review progress made on IE maturity model and identify next steps based on Year 1 & 2 actions:

- Progress made towards delivering our ambition – both for inclusivity and in relation to different protected characteristics

Anti Racism actions:

- Empathy Training:

Train leaders in authentic communication, ensuring their responses during crises reflect understanding and care. Take advantage of staff group expertise to help shape the messaging and tone of the communications that do go out.

- Enhanced Lone Worker Policies:

Strengthen safety protocols by incorporating tools like emergency support systems and culturally competent counselling in the existing employee assistance programme

- **Global Majority Action plan:**
Following CMT input – 3/3/26 – update the actions already agreed to further progress our support for Global Majority employees.

Staff network priorities:

- Complete the work underway to identify staff network priorities for year 3 of the strategy. To date, the following have been identified (but not all staff networks have yet provided input): **Disability Inclusion** (invisible disabilities such as neurodiversity, epilepsy, narcolepsy), **Carers** – unpaid or family carers and **Menopause**.