

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

2 DECEMBER 2015

EQUALITIES WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

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Summary

This report informs the Committee of the outcome of a recent meeting of the Equalities Working Group .

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Equalities Working Group was set up by the Employment Matters Committee and any recommendations will be a matter for the Employment Matters Committee to decide.

2. Background

2.1 The Committee established a Race Equality Review Working Group in July 2008 to review the actions taken in response to the Race Equality Review and comment on further actions needed. The Working Group's terms of reference was subsequently amended to enable it to meet with the Black Workers Forum, the Disabled Workers Forum and other equalities groups as appropriate on a regular basis and the name of the Working Group was changed to the Equalities Working Group.

2.2 The Equalities Working Group met on 21 October 2015. The Working Group drew from it a number of issues to bring to the Committee's attention including a summary of progress from each of the Forums present at the meeting.

3.0 Declaration Week

3.1 The Group considered a report on the results of Declaration Week (13-17 July 2015), the aim of which was to increase the number of staff providing equality information.

3.2 There had been a slight increase in declarations in relation to county of birth (from 7.3% to 10.3%), religion (from 33.4% to 36.9%) and Nationality/Citizenship (from 15.8% to 16.5%). The largest increase had been from those employees declaring their sexuality which had risen from 34.8% to 38.1%. Results for ethnic origin and those declaring a disability showed marginal decreases.

3.3 The results, whilst positive, still did not provide a significant amount of data for the Council to gain a confident picture of the make-up of its workforce in terms of minority groups. However, it was envisaged that further progress would be on-going with the support the employee equality forums provided to staff, together with organisational policies and processes.

3.4 It is anticipated that Declaration Week will be an annual event.

4.0 Disabled Workers Forum

4.1 The Forum highlighted the following issues

- The Forum would be holding an event on 4 December 2015, open to all employees, on back pain in the work place. The Council will be supporting this initiative.
- Clarity had been sought regarding the emergency evacuation procedures for Gun Wharf in terms of the arrangements for the evacuation of employees by EVAC chairs and precise location of places of temporary safety.
- Access problems at Eagle Court had been highlighted with the Council.
- Progress with installing induction loops in Gun Wharf meeting rooms was disappointing.
- The Forum was disappointed not to have been consulted on the new parking arrangements at Gun Wharf, particularly given the limited number of disabled spaces that would now be available. Those employees who required a disabled space but were required to travel to and from meetings etc. would be adversely affected.

5.0 Black Workers Forum

5.1 As part of the forthcoming Black History month, schools, young offenders' institutions and young disabled people would be involved in the young black achievers awards which the Forum would be sponsoring.

6.0 LGBTQ Forum

6.1 The Forum do not have a Chairperson at present following the departure from the Council of the previous Chairperson. Whilst it was still a struggle to maintain membership levels there had been some positive achievements including a new, refreshed web site, involvement with the Broken Rainbow charity, new leaflets publicising the Forum, a successful presentation at the adult social care providers' forum and attendance at the HR schools conference.

7.0 Risk Management

7.1 The Council is keen to ensure that its workforce represents the community, which supports our aim to provide high quality and responsive services.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 The Equalities Working Group acts as a consultation mechanism to enable Members to discuss issues with various bodies across the Council.

9.0 Financial and Legal Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9.2 The meetings of the Working Group will enable the Council to comply with its equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010.

10.0. Recommendation

10.1 That the report be noted.

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Background papers

None

Appendices

None