

Human Resources Committee Agenda



Date: Thursday, 30 April 2020

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Virtual Zoom Committee Meeting
with Public Access via <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-meetings>

Distribution:

Councillors: Harriet Bradley, Richard Eddy, Gary Hopkins, Jeff Lovell, Paula O'Rourke, Ruth Pickersgill and Jon Wellington, (Margaret Hickman substitute for Jeff Lovell)

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Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2020



Agenda

1. Election of Chair

The Committee is asked to note that Councillor Jeff Lovell has resigned as Chair of the Human Resources Committee with immediate effect. The Committee is now asked to make nominations, for the Chair, for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

2. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

(Pages 4 - 5)

3. Apologies for Absence

4. Declarations of Interest

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To agree the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record.

(Pages 6 - 12)

6. Public Forum

NB. up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item

Any member of the public or councillor may participate in Public Forum. The detailed arrangements for so doing are set out in the **Public Information Sheet** at the back of this agenda. Please note that the following deadlines will apply in relation to this meeting:-

Questions - Written questions must be received 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this means that your question(s) must be received in this office at the latest by 5 pm on 24 April, 2020.

Petitions and Statements - Petitions and statements must be received on the working day prior to the meeting. For this meeting this means that your submission must be received in this office at the latest by 12.00 noon on 29 April, 2020.

7. Covid 19 - Workforce Implications

(Pages 13 - 17)



8. Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under s.100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 2 (respectively) of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

9. Exempt staffing matter

(Pages 18 - 23)

10. Exempt staffing matter

(Pages 24 - 32)



Public Information Sheet

Inspection of Papers - Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

You can find papers for all our meetings on our website at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-meetings>

Covid-19: changes to how we hold public meetings

Following changes to government rules, we'll use video conferencing to hold all public meetings, including Cabinet, Full Council, regulatory meetings (where planning and licensing decisions are made) and scrutiny.

Councillors will use Zoom or Skype for Business to take part in the meetings and vote on agenda items.

We'll stream the meetings live on YouTube.

You can submit statements, questions and petitions ahead of the meetings in the same way as usual. We will send all statements to participating Councillors in advance and respond to all questions and petitions in writing.

You will not be able to present a public submission at the meeting at the current time. We're looking into options for increasing public participation at meetings held using video conferencing, including being able to present a statement or ask supplementary questions using Zoom. We hope to have this in place in by late May 2020.

Email democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Public Forum

Members of the public may make a written statement ask a question or present a petition to most meetings. Your statement or question will be sent to the Committee. Please submit it to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk The following requirements apply:

- The statement is received no later than **12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting** and is about a matter which is the responsibility of the committee concerned.
- The question is received no later than **5pm three clear working days before the meeting**.
- Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements.

By participating in public forum business, we will assume that you have consented to your name and the details of your submission being recorded and circulated to the Committee and published within the minutes. Your statement or question will also be made available to the public at the meeting to which it relates and may be provided upon request in response to Freedom of Information Act requests in the future.



We will try to remove personal and identifiable information. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this, and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Public Forum statements will not be posted on the council's website. Other committee papers may be placed on the council's website and information within them may be searchable on the internet.

During the meeting:

- Public Forum is normally one of the first items on the agenda, although statements and petitions that relate to specific items on the agenda may be taken just before the item concerned.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions. Public Forum will be circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting and then noted at the meeting.
- Please note that only written submissions can be considered at this time.

For further information about procedure rules please refer to our Constitution <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/how-council-decisions-are-made/constitution>

The privacy notice for Democratic Services can be viewed at www.bristol.gov.uk/about-our-website/privacy-and-processing-notice-for-resource-services

Webcasting/ Recording of meetings

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You can get committee papers in other formats (e.g. large print, audio tape, braille etc) or in community languages by contacting the Democratic Services Officer. Please give as much notice as possible. We cannot guarantee re-formatting or translation of papers before the date of a particular meeting.



Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

5 March 2020 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Paula O'Rourke (Chair), Harriet Bradley, Richard Eddy, Gary Hopkins, Paula O'Rourke, Ruth Pickersgill and Jon Wellington

Officers in Attendance:-

Mark Williams (Head of HR), John Walsh (Director: HR, Workforce and Organisational Design (Interim)), Mark Jefferson (HR Analytics and Reward Manager) and Steph Griffin (Head of Organisational Development and Internal Communications), Jeremy Livitt (Democratic Services)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Vice-Chair Councillor Paula O'Rourke (acting as chair in the absence of Councillor Jeff Lovell due to sickness) welcomed all parties to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Lovell.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Paula O'Rourke and Councillor Ruth Pickersgill declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 Avon Pension Fund Annual Report 2018/19 as they both received Teachers' Pensions.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 16th January 2020

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to the resolution of Minute Number 7 (Pay Policy Statement) being altered to record the fact that Councillor Richard Eddy and Councillor Gary Hopkins voted against this decision.

Action: Alter Minutes as above - Jeremy Livitt



Staff Led Groups – Update and Work Plan

It was noted that the informal meeting between members of the HR Committee and members of the staff led groups had not yet happened and needed to take place urgently.

Action: Mark Williams to fix the above meeting urgently and an item to be added to the Work Programme for the next meeting on Thursday 30th April 2020.

Action Sheets

It was agreed that Action Sheets should be prepared to keep track of actions arising out of HR Committee meetings

Action: Steve Gregory

5. Public Forum

It was noted that one Public Forum Statement had been received as follows:

Councillor Martin Fodor – Agenda Item 7: Avon Pension Fund

6. Work Programme

The Committee noted the Work Programme for future HR Committee meetings.

7. Avon Pension Fund Annual Report 2018/19

Steve Pearce gave a presentation on this item and made the following comments. He also responded to questions from Committee members as follows:

- The Investment Strategy continued to be reviewed with a series of workshops that had taken place over the last 6 months – a final decision would be made on 27th/28th March 2020
- The process for 2019/20 was being reviewed
- There were over 400 participating employers in the scheme, nearly half of whom have a small number of employees
- Academies were not currently represented at meetings. Therefore, if more schools became Academies, representation needed to be increased to reflect this
- 2018 Interim Valuation indicated that the funding deficit had improved significantly. 2018/19 had been a significant year for the pooling of investment assets
- £4 Billion remained to be transferred into the Brunel Fund and would be the main activity over the coming years



- More money was being put into low carbon investments. The Board had now accepted the moral argument as the economic argument for this was self-evident. Many industries that purely specialised in fossil fuel industries ran the risk of going out of business and therefore many were diversifying.
- Many Pension Funds were de-carbonising their assets rather than divesting them completely. It was noted that building infrastructure would require some products that led to carbon increase ie cement. The Avon Pension Fund was a leader in de-carbonising
- The Avon Pension Fund needed to engage with businesses such as EXXON and get them to change their approach
- Most large businesses with cash flow are energy companies – there were not yet enough other companies involved in wind or solar farms and battery storage
- The fund is using electronic technology to communicate with its members in order to save money
- The attention of Committee members was drawn to Tables 10 to 16 in the report setting out staffing levels, the number of members and employers in the fund and the costs and savings of the pooling of assets
- Steve Pearce advised that his role was to influence where assets were invested, to ensure the maximising of income while reducing risk, The fund had accurate cash flow predictions over 100 years
- It was challenging that Bristol only had one representative on the Pension Fund although it had the largest investment. However, BANES operated under regulations. If Bristol administered the fund, it would have more representation. Carla Denyer was the nominated substitute for Steve Pearce and had attended on a small number of occasions over the last three years
- A large number of academies transferred out of Local Authority control but many of their existing employees retained their pension rights and therefore the number of employees who were members increased
- Whilst the Risk Register indicated that it was difficult to recruit skilled labour, the pension sector remained strong in Bristol and attracted pension professionals.

Officers advised that BANES employed Pension Fund staff. However, since the Bristol area was a major financial centre, it would be difficult to recruit staff in this area of work at the market rate.

Committee members made the following comments:

- The switch to ethical investments was part of a market drive towards more sustainable solutions, many of which were more successful than the average stock market investor
- Committee members expressed confidence in the way the scheme was being run. The performance had significantly improved over the last few years

Action:

- (1) **That a letter be sent to BANES expressing concern at the lack of representation for Bristol City Council as such a major investor in the Avon Pension Fund – Mark Williams**



- (2) That the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England are contacted to see if they wish to specialise in pensions – Councillor Steve Pearce**
- (3) That a further update report be provided for the next meeting of the HR Committee once the Investment Strategy consultation period has finished and to include information concerning addressing the issue of rates of pay for employees who work in this area – Councillor Steve Pearce/Mark Williams**

8. Organisational Improvement Plan – Year Review

Stephanie Griffin introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The staff survey for 2020 had just started and 750 responses were already being received
- There were a number of key themes arising from 2019 survey and work had been carried out for each of these
- 3,200 responses had been received on 2019 survey
- A great deal of work had taken place concerning organisational values in relation to embedding workshops with key staff and the use of employee touchpoints. Each week there had been a Celebrating Success competition
- There was a leadership development programme involving Team Leaders and Team Managers
- The Internal Communications had been refreshed. New channels were being used to reach employees including follow-up surveys
- Technology was being used to help colleagues improve their skills was
- Supported internships were being developed for staff with learning disabilities. Whilst the previous target had been a bit ambitious, there had been 9 last year which were very positive success stories
- Performance and Talent Management – there were a lot of drop-in sessions to support in developing talent management
- Measures were being put in place to develop work force planning. As it was acknowledged that these were being inconsistently applied, work was taking place with the LGA to ensure good practice
- Apprenticeships – 270 were needed to sustain the intake
- Workforce and Well Being – First Aid Training and the introduction of a line manager with responsibility for mental health had been introduced. A very positive response had been received to these measures
- Emotional Resilience – there had been an increased focus on menopause support groups
- Structure Pay and Policy – the organisation’s values were underpinned by its policies. HR policies had been renewed
- Brand and Recruitment – online recruitment had been linked to I-Trent
- Social Media – BCC’s presence was being increased on social media
- Retention of Staff – it was acknowledged that further work was required in this area. Improved succession planning was one area which needed greater work. Creative ways were required to



help staff develop their career, including attachments to projects and secondments to avoid losing talent. The Bristol Leadership Challenge identified staff who might take part.

- Individual officers had been given responsibility for all the different streams of work. All the different work streams had been brought together in this document

In response to questions, officers made the following comments:

- A provider had been commissioned to help training staff on disability and equality **Action: Stephanie Griffin to advise HR Committee Members of details**
- Officers would investigate the possibility of internships for people with learning disabilities such as at the Vassal Centre Café **Action: Stephanie Griffin to investigate**
- It was noted that there would be a review of key HR policies for 2021/22 Work Programme **Action: Mark Williams to add to the Work Programme**
- Senior Leadership Recruitment needed to include equality of diversity. This was something that could be given a priority now that the SLT team was in place **Action: Mark Williams/John Walsh to investigate**
- Hard copies of all staff surveys had been submitted to remote locations. In addition, road shows and targeting of front line staff were also being used to ensure people outside the City Hall were reached. It was important to encourage people to set aside time to complete the survey, particularly on the front line
- For statistical reasons, the 2020 survey was largely the same as 2019 except for some areas, such as whistle-blowing
- Measures were being put in place to ensure that staff were properly supported since 2019 survey showed that 50% of staff did not feel supported
- In order to address staff concerns about confidence in responding to issues they raise, SLT had acknowledged the need for increased visibility. A great deal of work had been carried out with teams. All divisions had been requested to produce action plans concerning this. A weekly blog had been created. Generally, line managers indicated that they felt well supported.

Action: a letter to be sent to all the HR team thanking them for their work on this survey – Stephanie Griffin

9. Report on Exit Payments

The Committee noted the costs associated with early termination payments to employees for compulsory and voluntary redundancies. It was noted that details would appear in the annual accounts. Members' attention was drawn to Paragraph 10 which set out where the change had occurred.

Members noted the following:

- There had been 9 confidential agreements made in 2019. All of these were made on a very narrow basis and didn't affect the ability of employees to whistle blow



- People who left on the grounds of voluntary redundancy were prohibited from applying for Bristol City Council jobs for 12 months
- Most compulsory redundancies were for school crossing patrol staff and cleaning staff. Compensation had been at twice the statutory standard

Following concerns raised by a Committee member about one particular case of redundancy, the Chair advised that it would not be appropriate to discuss this issue in open session and without a written report providing any details. Any information should be presented to the Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence) to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to discuss at a future meeting.

10 Terms of Reference for Human Resources Committee

The Committee considered a report recommending revised Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee to Full Council on 17th March 2020.

It was proposed that the terms of reference for Human Resources Committee be revised to reflect the constitutional arrangement for setting the pay of Executive Directors and Directors set out in the proposed Pay Policy Statement 2020/21. In addition, additional updates were proposed for the HR Committee to reflect more clearly its roles and responsibilities.

Members also requested that a full review of the Terms of Reference was added to the 2020/21 Work Programme to assess whether the current TOR fully reflected the breadth of responsibility required by this Committee.

Resolved (unanimously) – that the revised Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference be approved by Full Council on 17th March 2020.

Action: Sam Willcock/ Mark Williams – refer to Full Council, Mark Williams to add to the 2020/21 Human Resources Committee Work Programme

11 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved – that the press and public be excluded from the following items by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

12 Salary of Director Post

The Committee considered whether or not approve the annual salary for a Director Post. They received a brief presentation from the Director concerned and then asked them to withdraw from the meeting to make their decision.

Resolved – that the Committee approves an annual salary of £120,000 for the Director in question.



Action: Mark Williams

13 Senior Staffing Verbal Update

The Committee expressed concern about the way a member of staff had been re-employed to a separate project following their previous role coming to an end. In particular, they were extremely concerned that the Human Resources Committee had not been advised about this arrangement.

Members expressed particular concern that due process had not operated which would enable other members of staff to apply for the job in question.

Resolved – that a report is provided to 30th April 2020 meeting of the Human Resources Committee setting out the following:

The Terms of Employment of the member of staff concerned to their new post

The Involvement of the person who employed them as a contractor

A Timeline Setting Out the Events concerned, including who made each decision during the process and when, including what information was made available for 19th December 2019 HR Committee

And that the Head of Paid Service is requested to attend this meeting

Action: John Walsh

14 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 10am on Thursday 30th April 2020 in a Committee Room, City Hall, College Green, Bristol.

Meeting ended at 12.55pm

CHAIR _____





HR Committee

30th April 2020

Report of: Director: Workforce & Change

Title: COVID-19 – workforce Implications

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Mark Williams (Head of Human Resources)

Contact Telephone Number: 07795 446270

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

Summary

COVID-19 has been the most significant incident the Council has had to manage in living memory. The council has responded quickly and effectively. This report provides the Committee with an update on the workforce implications of COVID-19 and the organisational response to the Pandemic.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Council employees have experienced sickness absence due to COVID-19 and some colleagues have also had to self-isolate. Some employees are shielding as they are in the high risk group. Testing is now available and is being prioritised for key workers who are self-isolating or symptomatic with COVID-19.
- Comprehensive advice to employees, volunteers and managers on how to manage the health and safety implications and risks of exposure to COVID-19 is in place and is updated regularly in line with national advice.
- 181 employees have been redeployed from their normal jobs to support the organisational response to the Pandemic.
- A casual worker retention scheme has been proposed to support casual workers whose monthly pay has ceased or diminished as a consequence of some services being scaled back or closed.
- Large numbers of staff have been enabled to work from home very effectively at short notice. We will be building on this and other rapid changes we have made in our organisational improvement plans.

Policy

1. The council's HR policies and procedures have in some instances being relaxed to support both colleagues and managers in response to the Pandemic. For example, emergency carers leave provisions have been relaxed and sickness absence related to COVID-19 will be discounted under the Sickness Absence Policy.

Consultation

2. **Internal**
Not required because this report is for information only.
3. **External**
Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

4. The organisation has had to respond swiftly to COVID-19. Museums and Libraries closed on 19th March and the Government restrictions took effect on the 23rd March 2020. Frontline services have had to maintain service but also review and quickly adapt the way services are delivered.
5. Human Resources and Trade Unions have worked closely together at the outset and issued a joint statement to all staff and managers which stated:-

In these unprecedented times the joint trade unions have agreed with the Council that:

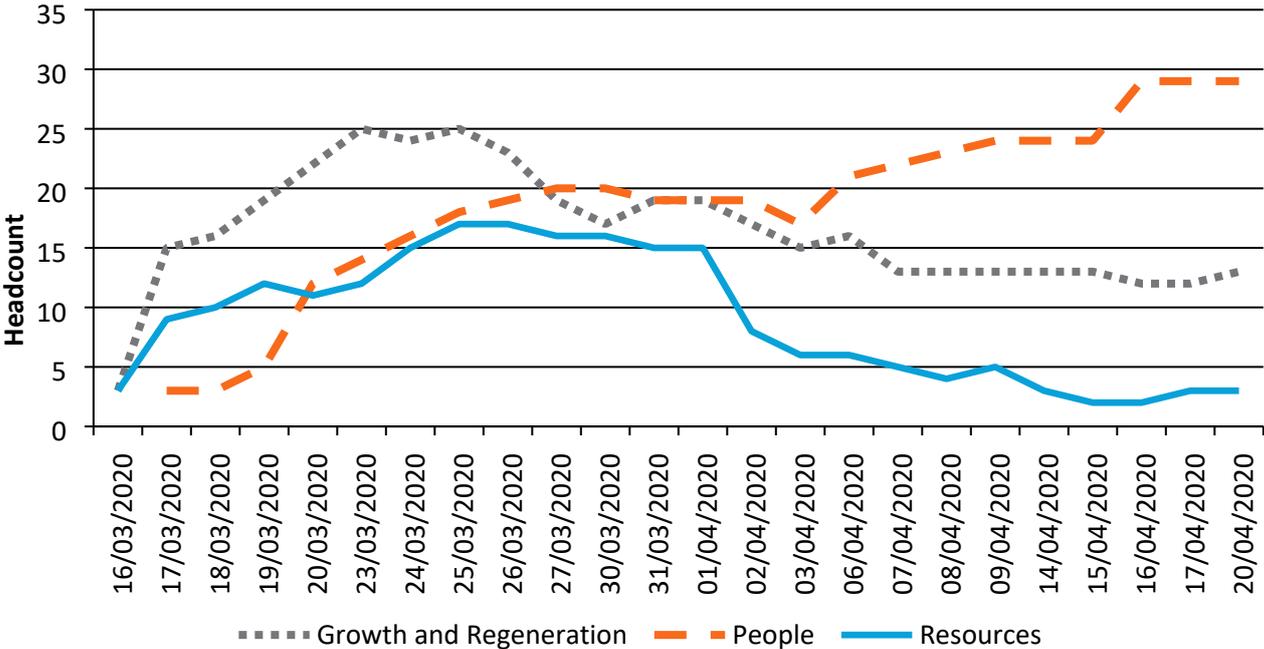
- *In line with advice from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, sickness trigger points will be adjusted/discounted for absence due to Coronavirus and self-isolation.*
- *The 6-day limit on Emergency Care Leave will be lifted until further notice.*
- *If necessary colleagues can be temporarily redeployed to cover other essential services subject to health and safety considerations*
- *Colleagues should work from home where they are able to, especially those that are in the categories deemed 'at risk' by Public Health England (If colleagues are in any doubt they should speak with their manager as a matter of urgency).*

All colleagues are asked to remember that they and the Council have a duty of care to keep themselves, their colleagues and our service users safe and healthy. If this means working differently managers and trade unions will support them in doing so.

6. Weekly meetings take place with the Head of HR and trade unions to review ongoing issues and address any workplace issues. The health and safety team also meet with senior safety representatives weekly to review guidance and discuss health and safety issues. This has involved close working with Public Health protection and the fact that national advice on the use of PPE is updated very regularly.
7. The HR team is part of the Incident Management Team and manages and oversees all requests for additional staffing sources staff for redeployment. Currently, 181 staff have been redeployed

at the time of writing this report.

- 8. Regular communications and updates are provided to all staff and managers and the HR team work collaboratively with the internal communications team to ensure up to date advice is provided. There are dedicated resources on the staff internal web pages which include FAQs, guidance on home working and health and well-being resources.
- 9. Daily reports are provided on COVID-19 sickness absence the chart below shows the absence rate by directorate since March 2020.



- 10. We have recently undertaken recruitment campaigns for both social work and care worker roles to ensure that service levels can be maintained throughout the Pandemic. Our care worker recruitment campaign was also included our commissioned providers in the City. Both campaigns have been successful. A number of social workers who recently left the council have also voluntarily returned to assist in supporting services which has also been very beneficial.
- 11. COVID-19 testing for employees in key worker roles with COVID-19 symptoms and those are self-isolating commenced with effect from 20 April 2020. Testing is being prioritised for colleagues in health and social care roles.
- 12. A casual worker retention scheme to support casual workers whose pay has ceased or diminished as a consequence of service closure and reductions is being put in place. The proposed scheme provides a monthly payment based on average earnings during 2019/20 for those staff that have worked in either January, February or March 2020. Colleagues affected can still work and the retention payment is adjusted if work has been undertaken. The scheme will be finalised on 23rd April which follows the publication of this report. A verbal update will be provided at the committee meeting.
- 13. Employees at all levels in the organisation have responded and adapted to COVID-19 very positively through their work. This has enabled services to adapt to changed circumstances rapidly. Also, large numbers of staff have been able to work successfully from their homes using

their work devices. Research will be undertaken to build on and develop the best practice as the organisation moves forward. Leadership Forums now operate online and leaders are very positive about the future and are committed to new ways of working.

14. Responding to COVID-19 has had significant implications for the workload of the HR Leadership team and this has meant that some aspect of the work programme for the team have had to be re-prioritised.

Proposal

15. That the Committee notes this report.

Other Options Considered

16. None.

Risk Assessment

17. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 16a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and

- promote understanding.

16b) Not required because this report is for information only.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

(b) Capital

Not required because this report is for information only.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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