

HR Committee

17th December 2020



Report of: Director of Workforce and Change

Title: Recruitment Update Report

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Mark Williams, Head of Human Resources

Contact Telephone Number: 07795 446270

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report and provides it views on the work being done in relation to recruitment and selection.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update on the work of the HR recruitment team and to seek the comments and observations of the committee on the report's findings. This provides an update on the work we're undertaking on recruitment since we last reported to the committee in December 2019.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Improving the diversity of our organisation through attracting promoting and retaining diverse talent is a key priority in our new Workforce Strategy and our Advancing Equalities Action Plan.
- Since our last report to the committee in December 2019, we have made progress and seen an increase in the appointments of women and those who identify as being from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBT groups. There has been a reduction in the number of appointments from those who identify themselves as Disabled but the rate of internal career progression for Disabled colleagues has improved.
- There has been a 33% reduction in the amount of recruitment taking place across the organisation.
- Our recruitment processes have been strengthened to ensure that we attract diverse talent from under-represented groups. As part of this work, we have removed a requirement for employees to secure managerial approval to apply for secondments.
- Re-commissioning of the recruitment advertising contract in 2021 to deliver social value, expert diversity knowledge and cost efficiencies.

Policy

We aim at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the job. Recruitment will be on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merits, measured against the job criteria and competencies.

We recognise the positive value of diversity, promote equality and challenge unfair discrimination. We use 'positive action' in an interview tie break situation to appoint candidates with protected characteristics which are under-represented in specific workgroups.

Employees can now apply for secondments without their managers' permission.

All Hiring Managers must have undergone Recruitment and Selection Training, which includes unconscious bias. Members involved in senior recruitment must attend a recruitment training one to one before participating in interview panels.

Consultation

3. Internal

Not required because this report is for information only.

4. External

Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

5. This report provides the HR Committee with an update on the work of the HR recruitment team over the past year and the current recruitment trends. It also highlights the ongoing work that is taking place to improve workforce diversity, supplier engagement and the Council's brand as an employer.

6. Improving the diversity of the organisation is a key organisational priority features in our new Workforce Strategy which was considered at the last meeting of this committee. The strategy also incorporates the Advancing Equalities Action Plan that was endorsed by Cabinet in July. Our service planning process for 2021/22 includes a requirement for all services to have a diversity plan which sets out the action that will be taken to address workforce diversity gaps. These plans will be monitored by a new Talent Development Group which includes senior leaders, trade unions and staff led groups.

7. The attached summary report (Appendix A) outlines recruitment trends at application, shortlist and appointment stage.

Key Findings

In 2020, we have advertised 33% less roles advertised compared to the same reporting period in 2019. There has been a reduction in turnover. As at 30 September 2020 the turnover rate was 7.7% (12% 30 September 2019). This is due to the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market and mirrors the position in all sectors.

Appointments of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic, LGBT and female candidates have increased which is a positive rate of improvement compared to 2019. Black Asian and Minority Ethnic colleague internal career progression rates remain higher than other groups.

Appointments of young people have decreased, despite an increase in the number of applications in the 16-24 age group. As a result of Covid-19 we have seen applications council wide significantly increase. With increased competition for jobs in the tightening labour market, younger people with less work experience are not as likely to score as highly in assessment processes. However, initiatives such as the Apprenticeship Scheme and Kickstart programme which are managed by the Council's Education and Skills team mean that we are able to ensure young people are joining the organisation. Both Apprentices and Kickstart Trainees are now paid the living wage (the rate is 80% for those aged under 18)

From the recruitment statistics there is a significant decrease in the application numbers of disabled candidates. However, further investigation has revealed issues in relation to the recent implementation of our new iTrent recruitment system. This is now being remedied and future reporting will be accurate. On a positive note, the internal career progression rate for disabled employees has improved by 1% since 2019.

Diverse head hunters for senior recruitment

8. We are working with Guidant our Managed Service Provider to ensure they source head-hunters who can offer specialist knowledge and a proven track record in diversity. This includes delivering a diverse shortlist and having a fee structure which is based on results.

9. Diverse panels are critical to ensuring good recruitment practice. In addition to developing our own diverse pool of external professionals who we can call upon to assist with senior interview processes, we are also working with a local SME diversity specialists. This will enable us to build partnerships and a network of professionals who can participate in interview panels and advise across other areas of the recruitment process from a diversity perspective.

Targeting under-represented groups in the workforce

10. The recruitment team are providing specialist advice to Hiring Managers who have an under-representation of diversity in their workgroups. Inclusion is put into the context of the role being advertised and this is carried through from essential criteria in the job paperwork to advert copy and microsites so potential candidates can understand diversity within a specific role.

We are currently reviewing all aspects of the current hiring process for social workers from an inclusion perspective. We will make changes where necessary and monitor the impact of these on the next recruitment campaign.

Social media, branding and the recruitment website homepage

11. We are using social media (including Facebook, google and linkedin) as a way to target diverse candidates and promote our employer brand. We are unable to target audiences by specific protected characteristics but social media has a broad platform of diverse users so we can be confident that our

message as an inclusive employer is visible to diverse groups.

12. We have recently reviewed and updated the information on our recruitment website page to include information about our Staff Led Group's (SLG's), including our accreditation logo's (Disability Confident, Stonewall etc). In addition, we have included more diversity led details in the sections on Bristol as a place to live and work through working closely with members and SLG's. These additions are designed to attract range of our diverse target audiences.

Assessment Tool Kit

13. We've developed a toolkit (in final stages) to share with hiring managers on best practice recruitment to give them practical support on the end to end recruitment process in particular designing appropriate interview and assessment approaches. This will help steer hiring managers away from the heavy reliance on interviews alone which is a poor predictor of performance.

Onboarding

14. The recruitment module in ITrent was implemented last April and we are now testing the onboarding module which is due to go live early 2021. This will improve candidate experience as there is functionality which enables bank details to be uploaded and documents such as the Code of Conduct to be reviewed and signed.

Staff Led Groups

15. The HR service work proactively with our staff led groups. The Young Professionals Network work proactively with our recruitment team to ensure job paperwork is fit for purpose for attracting young people. The HR team meet monthly with the embRACE staff led group and key focus of work is monitoring and reviewing recruitment and progression rates and will be focussing and using workforce data to drive the organisations talent development plans. We will be working closely with the Disabled Colleagues Network to become a level three (leader) Disability Confident accredited organisation which is key to attracting and improving diversity. We are currently a Level 1 organisation. Finally, we are working closely with the LGBT+ group to become a Stonewall Top 100 employer which will enhance our employer brand.

Recruitment Advertising Contract

In 2021, we will be re-commissioning a provider to deliver our recruitment advertising contract. We will be looking for providers to demonstrate an expert level of diversity knowledge in recruitment advertising; cost efficiencies in media buying and asking them to commit to our social value aims.

Proposal

That the Committee notes the report and provides its views on the work being done in relation to recruitment and selection.

Other Options Considered

16. None

Risk Assessment

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

Public Sector Equality Duties

15a) 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.

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

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

A Recruitment Thematic Report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.