

HR Committee

16th December 2021



Report of: Director: Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

Title: Staff Led Groups – Annual Report

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Rebecca Baldwin-Cantello, Head of Equality & Inclusion

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Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the activities of staff led groups since their terms of reference were refreshed in July 2020.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Progress update on the activities, spend and governance of BCC Staff Led Groups.



Policy

1. Diversity and Inclusion is a key theme of the Organisational Improvement Plan. This includes enabling staff led groups to be more effective across the organisation. There is also an Equality and Inclusion Strategy for the Council and it is a building block theme of the new Corporate Strategy.
2. **Internal**
The refreshed role of staff led groups was developed following extensive consultation and engagement with both staff led group Chairs and the wider membership of the respective groups. Corporate Leadership Board approved the new arrangements.
3. **External**
Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

4. Members of the committee received a report in January 2020 on the review of the staff led groups and new governance arrangements have been in place since July 2020.
5. There are four staff led groups. The embRACE network for Black, Asian and Minoritised employees, the Young Professionals Network for employees under the age of 31, the Disabled Colleagues Network and the LGBT+ Employee Group.
6. In the Summer of 2019, independent consultancy support was commissioned to advise the organisation on race equality and inclusion. Part of the brief included reviewing the effectiveness of staff led groups. This also included their work programmes and priorities. New terms of reference and governance arrangements for the staff led groups were agreed with the Chairs of the Staff Led Groups and approved by the Corporate Leadership Board. These arrangements have been in place for nearly 18 months and will be reviewed in early 2022. Key highlights from the activities of each SLG are detailed in Appendix A. There has been a wide range of activities undertaken but limited spend of the allocated budget for most groups (apart from embRACE).
7. Staff led groups have played a key role in supporting corporate processes such as:
 - Positive Action policy and toolkit
 - Equality and Inclusion Strategic Leadership Group and Directorate meetings
 - The review under the Equality Framework for Local Government
 - Talent Development Steering Group
 - Equality and Inclusion learning and development working group
 - National Staff Network Day
 - Equality visibility in the workplace working group
 - Diverse Voices feedback group
 - Corporate Strategy feedback group
 - Equality and Inclusion calendar
 - Sharing job opportunities/surveys/information/events with their membership

Proposal

8. That the Committee notes this report.

Other Options Considered

9. None.

Risk Assessment

10. 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:

Appendix A – Key activities for Staff Led Groups

Appendix B- embRACE progress report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None

Appendix A: Key Activities for Staff Led Groups

embRACE

1. Please see progress report provided at Appendix B.

Young Professionals Network (YPN)

1. New Chair and Head of Committee, Feb 2021: Caitlin Flint
2. 2 new Committee members taking total to 6, with two prospective members currently in discussions.
3. Grown over the last year to around 190 members. Defined the upper age limit for members of 30 – anyone under the age of 31 can join.
4. Key priorities: main priority is to ‘increase recruitment and retention of young people within the organisation’. Secondary priority is to create a social space where young people can meet each other, however less activity since Covid started last year. Continued quarterly meetings, which have been well attended over the past year. Undertook a BCC wide survey to understand key issues for young people, including development needs and ideas for attraction and retention. Fed in to the Apprenticeship Stakeholder Group.
5. Key accomplishments: running a successful 6 month mentoring scheme and planning for the next one; creating a shadowing scheme; supporting embRACE’s work on increasing the racial diversity of school governors; surveying young people within the council and sharing the findings with senior leaders; holding a focus group with members on how to improve retention and recruitment, and acting on the recommendations; organising a volunteering morning at the Bristol Family Cycling Centre for members; weekly newsletter; organised a rotating slot for all SLGs within the internal comms bulletin, which has greatly increased engagement. Only budget spend this year has been to pay for training that embRACE organised to increase racial diversity in school governing boards, which was £700.

LGBT+ Employees Group

1. Not as much progress this year due to pandemic, with many members of the LGBT+ Employee Group having increased workloads or being temporarily reassigned. However, during the past year the membership has increased and there are now over 130 members.
2. Limited budget spend on printing, lanyards and flags.
3. Key activities: Set up an LGBT+ Book Club, which meets every month and has been well received. Feeding into the Equality and Inclusion team’s work to support Gender Identity and transitioning in the workplace which is in its early stages.

Disabled Colleagues Network (DCN)

1. Key activities: Reasonable Adjustments Training and video planning, DCN Newsletter, mentoring training and toolkit, working collaboratively with BCC to establish a project to enable organisational accreditation as a Disability Confident Leader. DCN have also commissioned the West of England Centre Living (WECIL) to support and advise on the application. .
2. Also fed in to: Scrutiny Commission for People Directorate; Creative Solutions Board, Disability Equality steering group, Changing Futures stakeholder workshop, reviewing investigations policy, building walkthroughs to assess accessibility, reviewing EqIAs, testing products, mental health first aid meetings, disability in the workplace best practice meetings, National Disability Strategy meeting, Hybrid Working workgroups.
3. Limited budget spend on software and conference expenses.