

HR Committee

28th April 2022



Report of: Director of Workforce and Change

Title: Recruitment Update Report

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Mark Williams, Head of Human Resources

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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 2020.

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 Workforce Strategy.
- Since our last report to the committee in December 2020, we have seen an increase in the number of people joining the council who are Disabled, from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and LGB groups. There has also been a significant improvement in the number of Young People joining the council.
- There has been a 38% increase in the number of jobs advertised across the organisation in the last 12 months. However, the overall number of job applications received has reduced.
- Sampling of recruitment practice in the organisation has highlighted that there is good practice in relation to shortlisting candidates. However, there is some limited evidence to show that practice in relation to interview and selection methods could be further improved.
- Our recruitment advertising contract was recommissioned in July 2021 to deliver social value, expert diversity knowledge and cost efficiencies.

Policy

- 3.** 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 line managers' permission.

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

Consultation

4. Internal

Not required because this report is for information only.

5. External

Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

- 6.** 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, recruitment practice and the Council's brand as an employer. As an organisation we are continuing to see the diversity of the organisation improve, but there remains much more work to do particularly in relation to improving diversity at senior leadership levels.
- 7.** Improving the diversity of the organisation is a key organisational priority featured in our Workforce Strategy. Our service planning process includes a requirement for all services to have an equality and diversity plan which sets out the action that will be taken to address workforce diversity gaps. All of this work is overseen by the Chief Executive through the Strategic Equalities Group which includes senior leaders, trade unions and staff led groups.
- 8.** The attached summary report (Appendix A) outlines recruitment trends at application, shortlist and appointment stage. This includes comparison between 2020/21 and 2021/22. It should also be noted that the comparison is between 12 and 11 month periods.

Key Findings

9. Over the period April 2021 to March 2022, we have advertised 38% more roles compared to the reporting period in 2020/21. Despite more jobs being advertised, there has been a significant reduction in the overall numbers of job applications received. There has also been an increase in turnover rate 14.2% (6.8% 31 March 2021). This is due to the labour market returning to pre pandemic levels with higher levels of vacancies in the wider economy.
10. Appointments of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, LGB and female candidates have improved. In particular, the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic appointments has also increased. Appointments of young people (16-29) have increased significantly.
11. Despite the overall trend of job applications falling, more applications have been received from disabled people and more disabled people are securing employment with the Council.

Recruitment practice in the organisation

12. Our recruitment team have analysed recruitment data and audited a sample of jobs. This has revealed that hiring managers are shortlisting appropriately and practice is compliant with our policy. There have been two cases where candidates have been called to interview where their applications did not meet the essential criteria. We have found no evidence of managers failing to shortlist candidates with the appropriate skills and experience. There could be some further improvement at the selection stage i.e the selection methods used, interview questions and notes taken. We will prioritise HR support and activity in these areas with the aim of consolidating best practice. It is worth noting that the number of recruitment complaints received were low (11 in 2020 and 12 in 2021) considering the very high numbers of applications received.
13. We are reviewing our HR service offer and looking to provide hiring managers with a higher level of HR support depending on need and circumstances. We are currently surveying the hiring manager community to seek their views.

Supporting new joiners to the organisation

14. We provide a comprehensive onboarding and induction programme to support new joiners to the organisation and we have recently started to survey new staff about their experience of the organisation three months after they start with us. Very high levels of satisfaction are being reported, which is encouraging as it is essential that the organisation retains new joiners. We will present some of the findings at the committee meeting.

Targeting under-represented groups in the workforce

15. 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.

Social media, branding and the recruitment website homepage

16. 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.
17. Our recruitment website page includes information about our Staff Led Group's (SLG's), including our accreditation logos (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 a range of our diverse target audiences. We are also using this approach to support our senior executive recruitment which we advertise through job specific websites / microsites.

Assessment Tool Kit

18. Hiring managers now have access to a tool kit 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 helps steer hiring managers away from the heavy reliance on interviews alone which is a poor predictor of performance.

Staff Led Groups

19. 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 a 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 meet monthly with the Disabled Colleagues Network (DCN). We are working collaboratively with the DCN to become a level three (leader) Disability Confident accredited organisation which is key to attracting and improving diversity. A key area of focus is to improve practice particularly in relation to supporting reasonable adjustments during the hiring process.

Recruitment Advertising Contract

20. We have re-commissioned our recruitment advertising contract. We continue to have the same provider who provides an expert level of diversity knowledge in recruitment advertising; cost efficiencies in media buying and commitment to our social value aims.

Proposal

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

Other Options Considered

22. None

Risk Assessment

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

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 24a) 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 information 2021/22.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.