

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 17th December, 2018.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chair), Cllr Louise Baldock (Vice-Chair), Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Gillian Corr and Cllr Julia Whitehill (Substitute for Cllr Elsi Hampton).

Officers: Beccy Brown, Jill Douglas, Reuben Kench, Lorraine Dixon, Roisin McKenzie, Haleem Ghafoor, Gary Woods, Peter Bell (DCE).

Also in attendance: Cllr Steve Nelson (Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety), Ferzana Ahmed (Halo Project), Alex Whitmore, Elisha Kaur, Kameron Spence (Big Committee), James Hadman (Catalyst).

Apologies: Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mick Moore

PEO 48/18 **Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

PEO 49/18 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

PEO 50/18 **Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2018 for approval / signature**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meetings held on 25th October 2018.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

PEO 51/18 **Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation**

Consideration was given to the draft final report for Scrutiny Review of Digital Optimisation. Members considered each recommendation individually and agreed the final report.

AGREED that the final report be accepted and forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

PEO 52/18 **Scrutiny Review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce**

Members received information regarding the Scrutiny Review of Under - Representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce from the Catalyst Multicultural Forum and Big Committee (formerly Stockton Youth Assembly).

Big Committee

Two members of the Big Committee shared their (and their peers') thoughts around the Council as a potential employer (e.g. services that the Council provides, job opportunities), views on barriers to recruitment to the Council, and ideas on increasing young BME community awareness of Council employment opportunities and inspiring the young BME community to want to work for SBC:

SBC as a potential employer

- When others don't see BME in a workplace they sometimes can't help but think 'do I stand a chance'.
- BME peers had similar views in that they have never given any thought about working in the Council.
- Some are not aware of what the Council can offer in terms of job opportunities – don't hear about these jobs in schools.
- Peers from outside the Big Committee perceive the Council to be politically biased, and compare the Council with what other places are doing. Need to show off that it is at a local level that they are doing their work and that the jobs that are advertised are great opportunities across the board from business to events to services to communication and marketing. Need to show that the Council provides services that are needed, as it isn't very clear how this supports the community.
- The Council, like national government, is mainly white people.
- Apprenticeships not that noticeable or talked about at schools – better promotion of these needed (not everyone wants to go to University).

Barriers to recruitment

- Experience and qualifications – same as in any job.
- Perception that you have to be politically minded to work for the Council - if you don't have a great passion for politics you can't work in the Local Authority.
- People have strong ideas and believe that there aren't jobs in the Council to help the Borough.

Increasing awareness of SBC as an employer

- Awareness campaigns in schools, what the Council do and how they support BME communities – go into colleges and schools and talk to others about the opportunities (e.g. assemblies).
- Openness and clear statistics on the BME community within Stockton Council where they can be easily accessed by the public.
- Campaign similar to the 'Abuse Champions'?
- Create a poster and use social media to attract wider audiences (key part of Big Committee as it links people together). Pictures/images have greater impact – make sure documents are not too wordy and include links to other development opportunities so people can see the benefits of working for SBC.
- Campaigns targeting parents can be useful as they can feed information to their children.

Catalyst Multicultural Forum

Some parts of the BME community (possibly the more vulnerable groups – e.g. asylum seekers) are represented on Catalyst's Multicultural Forum, and were therefore asked for their views on the Council as a potential employer, barriers to recruitment (to the Council), and ideas on increasing awareness of Council job opportunities and inspiring the BME community to want to work for the Council:

SBC as a potential employer

- 'If I look at recruitment for BME is less than 1% in all government or higher institute of employment. We are marginalised and less represented, either in the police, paramedics, local Councils, army or the intelligence

services. I made several attempts in the police force but couldn't and other sectors within the Council. I think there is lots to be done on public awareness and discrimination within the employment selection and criteria. Lots has to done to tackle this barrier' (African community group representative).

- Lack of BME Elected Members – can influence perception of the Council itself.
- Some view the Council as strict – need to change this to a more friendly, approachable perception.

Barriers to recruitment

- Not knowing about the opportunities being available due to their isolation or being new to the area (not even aware of general (non-Council) opportunities) – need some sort of mechanism to support this.
- Lack of confidence / self-esteem.
- Language barriers.
- Not having the specific qualifications / skills for roles.
- Employment not in forefront of some people's minds (e.g. if they are awaiting an asylum decision).

Increasing awareness of SBC as an employer

- Distribute information to BME parents through schools which their children attend (parents liaise with schools more than most other agencies).
- BME community groups which are already being accessed such as the day care centre, the attendees may not be eligible for the opportunities themselves, but their carers or other family members may be so information can still be passed on.
- Mosques have a good network, especially Friday prayers to target BME males.
- Already established projects who have access to BME communities, such as Nur Fitness, Cultures, Halo, Apna services, Tumhara Centre – job fairs that engage these groups could be very beneficial.

The information received from other external organisations included:-

North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)

NEAS provided information on issues they has experienced in relation to workforce diversity and efforts to address this (a number of which have been similarly tried by SBC). The NHS (of which NEAS is a part of) has used the WRES (Workforce Race Equality Standard) framework to help progress work on equality – this found that the Ambulance sector does not perform well on race issues and a number of interventions were thus identified including:

- 10 BAME community events were held in 2017 focusing on employment and access to service. Although NEAS worked in partnership with BAME community groups and funded them for sessions, attendance was poor and NEAS actually saw a decline in applications.
- Attended Melas in Newcastle and Middlesbrough and targeted recruitment to BAME communities.
- Reviewed recruitment literature to include many more images of BAME people and rebranded itself as an 'inclusive organisation' on the cover.
- Launched a BAME staff network group who are helping us to identify and work through key challenges, releasing staff to get involved in improving our work.

- Attended a range of faith and cultural events with BAME staff representatives showcasing the Trust as an inclusive employer.
- Explored how it can better link with Universities in the area to promote vacancies to their students who identify as BAME.
- Send all NEAS vacancies to a range of BAME community group in addition to listing them on NHS jobs.

In 2017-2018, data has suggested that NEAS are doing fairly well at attracting BAME people (3.9% of all applications), 1% below the regional population for visible BAME people. 3.6% of all applications shortlisted identify as BAME, but only 1.8% of all appointed people identify as BAME. NEAS recognise there is a potential issue between shortlisting and appointment, but do not yet fully understand the cause for this or if it is at assessment, psychometric testing, interview, test stage or other stages. NEAS are working on improving information on this.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Cleveland)

Cleveland Police will be launching a new initiative in 2019 where they will engage with BAME communities, and encourage and mentor members from these communities to join the Police. Cleveland Police are also taking measures to ensure retention is addressed, and that the practical advice under the National Police Chiefs' Council Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025 is not only considered, but, where necessary, implemented.

Committee discussions noted as follows:

- Catalyst Multicultural Forum representatives were very keen to continue the conversations around these issues following the completion of this review.
- Catalyst manage the 'Stockton Volunteers' website, and will be focusing on BME communities in the New Year.
- Recent trend of Local Authorities cutting jobs rather than recruiting, but there will be opportunities that arise, and the Council could take advantage of when established BME groups come together to sell itself and the roles it employs. Perception within the Catalyst Multicultural Forum that austerity has meant no opportunities.
- Need to make clear the varied job roles the Council offers – easy to read, not just a long list (good visual impact).

BME Staff Forum – Quarterly Meeting

Following an invitation from the Chair of the BME Staff Forum, the Committee Vice-Chair attended the latest quarterly meeting of the Forum in December 2018. Feedback was provided to the Committee, with key points noted as follows:

- Apprenticeships offer an opportunity for individuals from the BME community to get involved with SBC.
- Important to get into schools and spread the message about job roles and opportunities in the Council.
- Need to raise awareness of SBC and promote its current diversity – might also be useful to share BME staff interests outside of their work.
- Should not just rely on one person or department to increase workforce diversity – all directorates should consider what they can contribute to this cause (utilise the Council's Talent Network?).

- Managers need to be appropriately trained, not just on diversity, but on 'unconscious bias'.

Employee Survey 2018

From a corporate perspective, it was also noted that the deadline for responses to the latest Council Employee Survey (undertaken every two years) has recently passed, and analysis is currently underway. A set of results specific to BME respondents was subsequently made available to the Committee, highlights of which included:

- BME response rate was 52.84% (whole Council rate was 58.68%).
- Overall, responses from BME staff were more positive when compared against responses from all Council staff.
- Some elements of the survey saw lower satisfaction responses from BME staff when compared to the overall workforce – it was suggested these areas should be examined in more detail.

Members would consider a summary of the evidence and formulate draft recommendations at its meeting to be held on 9 January 2019.

AGREED that the information be noted.

PEO 53/18 **Work Programme 2018-2019**

Consideration was given to the People Select Committee Work Programme 2018-2019.

AGREED that the People Select Committee Work Programme 2018-2019 be noted.

PEO 54/18 **Chair's Update**

The Chair had nothing further to update.