

People Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce

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(DRAFT) Final Report
January 2019

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People Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
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Select Committee - Membership

Councillor Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chair)
Councillor Louise Baldock (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sonia Bailey
Councillor Gillian Corr
Councillor Elsi Hampton
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Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following people for contributing to its work:

- Beccy Brown (Director – HR, Legal & Communications) – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC)
- Jill Douglas (HR & Legal Services Manager) – SBC
- Roisin McKenzie (Solicitor / Chair of the BME Staff Forum) – SBC
- Haleem Ghafoor (Senior Marketing & Engagement Officer) – SBC
- James Hadman (Community Programme Manager) – Catalyst
- Ferzana Ahmed (Support Officer) – Halo Project
- Alex Whitmore – The Big Committee (Bright Minds Big Futures)
- Elisha Kaur – The Big Committee (Bright Minds Big Futures)
- Mark Johns (Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion Manager) – North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)
- Those BME community groups who responded to the questions circulated via the Catalyst Multicultural Forum.
- Other members of The Big Committee who provided their views on the questions posed as part of this review.

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Foreword

TBC



Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell
Chair
People Select Committee



Cllr Louise Baldock
Vice-Chair
People Select Committee

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2018-21 themes and objectives:

Our Council

- Continue to attract, develop and support diverse, capable and resilient employees.
 - Further enhance the diversity of our workforce through recruitment and retention of under-represented groups.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has been working for a number of years to increase the representation of the BME community in its workforce. It is a stated aim of the Council's People Strategy that it wants to 'recruit and retain a diverse and talented workforce'. SBC aim to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its residents, customers and stakeholders, and recognises that promoting equality benefits public services for all.

The Council monitors the workforce profile regularly and completes an annual Workforce Equality Information report as part of its work to assess the effectiveness of its actions to increase the diversity of its workforce, and also to meet its duty under the Equality Act 2010. The annual Workforce Equality report forms part of the Council's broader duty to promote equality under the Act, and provides a summary and analysis of SBC's workforce against protected characteristics.

The workforce in the annual report is part of a range of management information about SBC's workforce which is considered by the Council's Senior Management Team, as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Trade Unions, Councillors and Human Resources). In the latest report covering the period April 2016 – March 2017, the number of BME employees as at 31st March 2017 was 74 (2% of the workforce) – this remains fairly constant compared to 2016 (72 employees; 2% of the workforce). The report also shows that 2% of new starters declared themselves from a BME origin. These statistics show that the SBC workforce is under-represented by the BME community as 5% of the population of Stockton-on-Tees are BME (31st March 2017).

SBC continues to promote vacancies within the BME community through Community Engagement and supports the retention of its BME workforce, particularly through the BME staff forum. However, it is hoped that further progress can be made, with the aim for the diversity of the Council's workforce to be representative of the diversity of the Borough.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

It is proposed that the Committee assess the Council's performance against the 'Roadmap to Success', recommended to organisations in the independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – *Race in the workplace* to assist leaders to move positively towards a more diverse workforce:

- 1) Consider our Data
- 2) Take Accountability
- 3) Raise Awareness
- 4) Examine Recruitment
- 5) Change Processes

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

Improved processes for recruiting and retaining BME employees and a workforce which is more representative of the communities we serve which will support and strengthen the delivery of services.

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the People Select Committee's scrutiny review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce.
- 1.2 The independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017), commissioned by the Government in 2016, sets out recommendations for employers in the public and private sectors to improve diversity within their organisations. The review concludes that implementing the identified changes will help organisations to recruit a more diverse workforce, take full advantage of their existing talent, and service their customer base more effectively by having a more representative workforce. Acting on these recommendations should result in fairer, more inclusive workplaces, happier staff and, ultimately, increases in productivity.
- 1.3 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has been working for a number of years to increase the representation of the BME community in its workforce. It is a stated aim of the Council's People Strategy that it wants to 'recruit and retain a diverse and talented workforce'. SBC seek to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its residents, customers and stakeholders, and recognises that promoting equality benefits public services for all.
- 1.4 The Council monitors the workforce profile regularly and completes an annual Workforce Equality Information Report as part of its work to assess the effectiveness of its actions to increase the diversity of its workforce, and also to meet its duty under the Equality Act 2010. The annual Workforce Equality report forms part of the Council's broader duty to promote equality under the Act, and provides a summary and analysis of SBCs workforce against protected characteristics.
- 1.5 The workforce in the annual report is part of a range of management information about SBCs workforce which is considered by the Council's Senior Management Team, as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Trade Unions, Councillors and Human Resources). In the latest report covering the period April 2016 – March 2017, the number of BME employees as at 31st March 2017 was 74 (2% of the workforce) – this remains fairly constant compared to 2016 (72 employees; 2% of the workforce). The report also shows that 2% of new starters declared themselves from a BME origin. These statistics show that the SBC workforce is under-represented by the BME community as 5% of the population of Stockton-on-Tees are BME (31st March 2017).
- 1.6 SBC continues to promote vacancies within the BME community through Community Engagement and supports the retention of its BME workforce, particularly through the BME Staff Forum. However, it is hoped that further progress can be made, with the aim for the diversity of the Council's workforce to be representative of the diversity of the Borough.
- 1.7 The main focus for this review was to assess the Council's performance against the 'Roadmap to Success', recommended to organisations in the independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – *Race in the workplace* to assist leaders to move positively towards a more diverse workforce:

- 1) Gather Data (organisations must gather and monitor data)
 - 2) Take Accountability (senior executives must take accountability)
 - 3) Raise Awareness (all employers must raise awareness of diversity issues)
 - 4) Examine Recruitment (HR directors must critically examine recruitment processes)
 - 5) Change Processes (responsible teams must change processes to encourage greater diversity)
- 1.8 The Committee found that SBC has demonstrated a commitment to increasing the diversity of its workforce and making it more representative of the population it serves. Whilst this is reflected in its Council Plan (and indeed brought about this very review), SBC acknowledge that despite various approaches over recent years, the percentage of BME staff in the Council's workforce remain static and therefore below its stated aim for the diversity of its workforce to be representative of the Borough's working population.
- 1.9 The effects of austerity, both in terms of its impact on Local Authority recruitment and the perceptions of Council employment opportunities, cannot be understated. The Committee noted the significantly reduced SBC workforce when compared to March 2011, and although the ethnicity profile has remained consistent in recent years, it is highly likely that for many people (including those from a BME background), seeking work within a Council was not viewed as a realistic option. This was reflected in some of the evidence received via the Catalyst Multicultural Forum which includes BME community group representation.
- 1.10 When analysing the workforce data, the Committee were mindful that the prevalence of 'undeclared' ethnicity disclosures may be distorting the actual numbers of BME staff the Council employs. Whilst it cannot be assumed that the number of undeclared ethnicities would significantly alter the current workforce diversity picture, more needs to be done to encourage staff (and applicants to SBC) to disclose their ethnicity, so the Council can reflect with greater certainty how representative it really is. This, of course, should be undertaken in a sensitive manner, with clarity provided on why such information is being sought, and how it will be used.
- 1.11 The McGregor-Smith Review (2017) emphasises the importance of Senior Executive accountability. It is to be welcomed that the SBC Chief Executive initiated the BME Staff Forum's work on increasing the Council's workforce diversity and promotes the Forum as part of the Corporate Induction for new starters. However, as seen in the 'ethnicity by directorate' information presented to the Committee, there are differences in BME staff representation across all Council departments, and the reasons for this should be explored further.
- 1.12 Regarding recruitment, the Committee were struck by the data presented on the numbers of BME applicants, those applicants subsequently invited to interview, and those appointed (when compared to the total numbers of applicants, interviews and appointments). The percentages for applications and interviews were very positive (over 5%), but the number of actual appointments was much lower (less than 2%). The Committee note that work is underway to examine the reasons for this, and factors such as interview panel diversity and interviewer training (i.e. eliminating 'unconscious bias')

should be considered and addressed. Some form of interview evaluation should also be implemented to allow applicants to comment on the interview process which may identify areas for improvement.

- 1.13 Whilst existing engagement mechanisms with the BME community were outlined, the fact that numbers of BME staff remain static point to a required change of approach when attempting to increase workforce diversity. Acknowledging that resources are not as abundant as in previous times, the Committee heard on several occasions the need for the Council to sell itself more in terms of what it does and what job roles it offers. This is particularly relevant when considering the longer-term workforce, namely, younger people, some of whom provided their views on working for the Council, and have not considered this as an option, are unaware of potential Local Authority careers, or are put off by perceived political associations. Increasing the Council's presence at targeted job fairs, engaging with already established BME community groups, and advertising itself and its career pathways within schools (to young people and their parents / carers) would be a positive step forward. The Council should also ensure it promotes itself as an inclusive organisation that accommodates the cultural needs of its staff.
- 1.14 The existence of the BME Staff Forum reflects well on the Council, and the Committee were pleased to hear direct from Forum members on the issues they have experienced in relation to recruitment and retention at SBC. The Forum are proactive and have done much to enhance the diversity of the workforce, not least its draft Action Plan which is thorough and ambitious. The Council should continue to lean on the lived experience of Forum members, and ensure their voice and expertise are a key part of future workforce planning, though care is needed that the Forum (or HR for that matter) are not left solely to attempt to address workforce diversity – this is a corporate-wide responsibility.
- 1.15 SBC are by no means alone in attempting to address their workforce diversity, and many other organisations face similar challenges. This review has not uncovered a specific source of best practice which is seeing improved recruitment of BME individuals, but by assessing the Council against the 'Roadmap to Success' (recommended to organisations in the independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – *Race in the workplace*), this work has highlighted aspects where the Council have adopted positive approaches to BME recruitment and retention, as well as areas to build on in pursuit of making its workforce more representative of the Borough's residents.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) Further work be undertaken to investigate and follow-up on undeclared ethnicity of Council staff, ensuring clarity around why the Council is requesting ethnicity data and what it will be used for, and providing a paper copy of the equality monitoring form for those staff not within a traditional office base.**
- 2) Discussions be held at Senior Management level to understand variances of BME representation across directorates and encourage shared corporate responsibility in increasing workforce diversity. Consideration be given to directorate-specific Action Plans to identify and promote potential employment opportunities to the BME community.**
- 3) Senior Management should continue to periodically promote all Council staff forums (including the BME Staff Forum) and take positive action to ensure Officers are supported to attend and engage.**
- 4) Interview evaluation be developed to allow any Council job applicant to comment on the interview process (organisation, documentation, interview panel, questions, etc.) which may identify areas for improvement.**
- 5) To increase awareness of the Council, what it provides, and potential routes for employment (including apprenticeships, work placements, etc.), SBC promote itself as a diverse employer across a large and varied range of services through multiple mediums (e.g. via social media, in schools / colleges, at targeted job fairs, with established BME community groups).**
- 6) A poster / social media campaign be developed (similar to 'Be a Councillor') to promote the diversity of the Council's staff and the roles they undertake.**
- 7) The responses from BME staff to the Employee Survey 2018 are explored, particularly around opportunities to learn, develop and progress.**
- 8) Subject to a review of who is responsible for each identified action, a final draft BME Staff Forum Action Plan be endorsed by the Council, and the proposed report on progress of this Action Plan be shared with the People Select Committee.**

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the People Select Committee's scrutiny review of Under-representation of BME Communities in the SBC Workforce.

2.2 The main focus for this review was to assess the Council's performance against the 'Roadmap to Success' (see Appendix 1), recommended to organisations in the independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – *Race in the workplace* to assist leaders to move positively towards a more diverse workforce¹:

- 1) Gather Data (organisations must gather and monitor data)
- 2) Take Accountability (senior executives must take accountability)
- 3) Raise Awareness (all employers must raise awareness of diversity issues)
- 4) Examine Recruitment (HR directors must critically examine recruitment processes)
- 5) Change Processes (responsible teams must change processes to encourage greater diversity)



2.3 The Committee took evidence from representatives of the Council's HR department, as well as Community Engagement Officers and the Chair of the Council's BME Staff Forum. To gain a wider perspective on issues around workforce diversity, the Committee also received contributions from the Catalyst Multicultural Forum (reflecting on responses to questions circulated to BME groups represented on the Forum), the Big Committee (formerly Stockton Youth Assembly) and the North East Ambulance Service.

In addition, the Committee Vice-Chair attended the latest BME Staff Forum quarterly meeting in December 2018 to further discuss aspects in relation to this review, in particular the draft BME Staff Forum Action Plan.

2.4 Recognising the increasing pressure on the Council's finances, it is imperative that in-depth scrutiny reviews promote the Council's policy priorities and, where possible, seek to identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services.

¹ The 'Roadmap to Success' includes a sixth element – Government Support (employers should be supported in making these changes by Government). Since it is directed at Government, the element was not considered as part of this review.

3.0 Background

'Every person, regardless of their ethnicity or background, should be able to fulfil their potential at work. That is the business case as well as the moral case. Diverse organisations that attract and develop individuals from the widest pool of talent consistently perform better.'

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

- 3.1 The independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017), commissioned by the Government in 2016, sets out recommendations for employers in the public and private sectors to improve diversity within their organisations. The review concludes that implementing the identified changes will help organisations to recruit a more diverse workforce, take full advantage of their existing talent, and service their customer base more effectively by having a more representative workforce. Acting on these recommendations should result in fairer, more inclusive workplaces, happier staff and, ultimately, increases in productivity.
- 3.2 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has been working for a number of years to increase the representation of the BME community in its workforce. It is a stated aim of the Council's People Strategy that it wants to 'recruit and retain a diverse and talented workforce'. SBC seek to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its residents, customers and stakeholders, and recognises that promoting equality benefits public services for all.
- 3.3 The Council monitors the workforce profile regularly and completes an annual Workforce Equality Information Report as part of its work to assess the effectiveness of its actions to increase the diversity of its workforce, and also to meet its duty under the Equality Act 2010. The annual Workforce Equality report forms part of the Council's broader duty to promote equality under the Act, and provides a summary and analysis of SBCs workforce against protected characteristics.
- 3.4 The workforce in the annual report is part of a range of management information about SBCs workforce which is considered by the Council's Senior Management Team, as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Trade Unions, Councillors and Human Resources). In the latest report covering the period April 2016 – March 2017, the number of BME employees as at 31st March 2017 was 74 (2% of the workforce) – this remains fairly constant compared to 2016 (72 employees; 2% of the workforce). The report also shows that 2% of new starters declared themselves from a BME origin. These statistics show that the SBC workforce is under-represented by the BME community as 5% of the population of Stockton-on-Tees are BME (31st March 2017).
- 3.5 SBC continues to promote vacancies within the BME community through Community Engagement and supports the retention of its BME workforce, particularly through the BME Staff Forum. However, it is hoped that further progress can be made, with the aim for the diversity of the Council's workforce to be representative of the diversity of the Borough.

4.0 Findings

Gather Data

A roadmap
to success

Organisations must gather and monitor the data by:

- *Setting, then publishing aspirational targets;*
- *Publishing data to show how they are progressing;*
- *Doing more to encourage employees to disclose their ethnicity.*

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

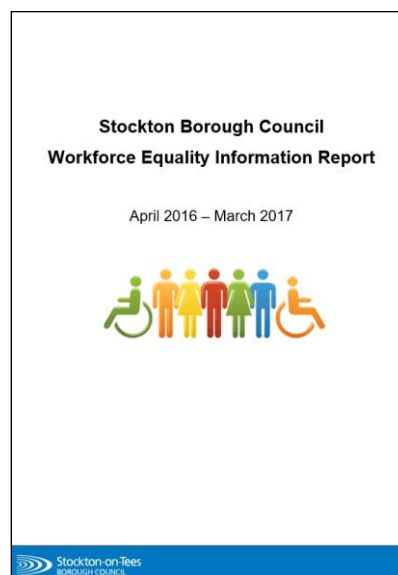
Aspirations

- 4.1 One of the key objectives within the Council Plan 2018-2021 is to ‘continue to attract, develop and support diverse, capable and resilient employees’ – translating this into a HR target, the Council seeks ‘a workforce that is representative of the working population in the Borough’. Such a vision is not about ticking boxes – the Council believes this is the right thing to do (and have been committed to it for a long time), and recognises the many benefits in achieving it (not just BME, but all aspects of diversity). A number of approaches have been tried in the past, but the percentage of BME staff in the Council’s workforce remain static.
- 4.2 The very purpose of this review (and the reason it was initially proposed as a scrutiny topic) is to find new ways in which the Council can move towards its aim for the diversity of its workforce to be representative of the diversity of the Borough.

Data

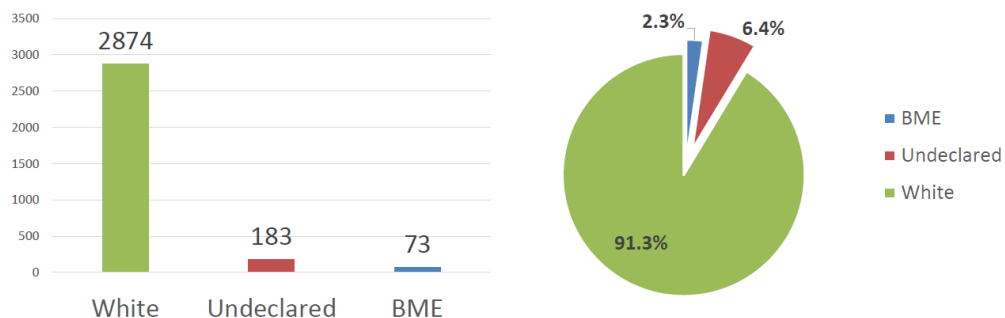
- 4.3 For background information, the Council’s *Workforce Equality Information Report 2016-2017* (the latest version) was shared with the Committee, and this provided a workforce profile as at the 31st March 2017, as well as data for the period 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017. Headline statistics from this report included:

- Ethnicity breakdown in Stockton-on-Tees (population 191,610): 95% white / other; 5% BME.
- Ethnicity breakdown in SBC (3,301 staff): 92% white / other; 2% BME (74); 5% undeclared.



- 4.4 The report highlighted that, over the last six years, there has been a significant reduction in the total number of SBC employees – staffing resources have decreased by over 25%, from 4,260 as at the 31st March 2011 to 3,183 as at the 31st March 2017. SBC employee numbers reduced by 3.6% from 2016 to 2017, though the gender, age, ethnicity, religious and disability profile has remained consistent compared to 2016.

- 4.5 In terms of recruitment and retention, of the 301 new employees appointed by the Council to permanent or temporary contracts in 2016-2017, 2% declared themselves as BME (note: 8% of new starters did not disclose their ethnicity). Regarding those leaving SBC (424 in 2016-2017), 1.4% were from a BME background.
- 4.6 Examples of employee engagement in order to support staff were listed including:
- Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) – a programme across the whole of SBC looking at who the Council are, how it does things, and its values and behaviours. Covers staff support and development, team work and talent ID.
 - Equality Staff Forums – includes BME.
 - Employee Survey – undertaken every two years and enables employees to share thoughts about working for SBC and their job role.
- 4.7 In 2016, the Council conducted an Equal Pay Audit which involved comparing the pay of protected groups who are doing equal work in the organisation for National Joint Council, Chief Officer and Soulbury terms and conditions. The race pay gap for all employee contracts is 7.7% in favour of BME employees.
- 4.8 A workforce profile report is collated every quarter, and this is used to aid the Council's workforce planning. More recent workforce data (as of the 30th September 2018) detailing a number of indicators was provided to Committee, including an ethnicity breakdown.



SBC workforce diversity (as at 30th September 2018)

- 4.9 As previously noted, the Council seeks 'a workforce that is representative of the working population in the Borough'. Whilst the population of Stockton-on-Tees is 5.4% BME, the Borough's working population is 4.1% BME (*Office for National Statistics 2011 Census*). To achieve 4.1%, there would need to be around 130 BME staff working at the Council (assuming the total staff numbers are the same).
- 4.10 A breakdown of 'ethnicity by directorate' was shared (below) – those directorates with the highest percentages of BME staff have the lower number of overall staff.

Directorate	BME	% BME	Total Headcount
Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services	4	4.6%	87
Adoption Tees Valley	0	0.0%	32
Adults & Health	20	3.6%	557
Chief Executive	1	14.3%	7
Children's Services	14	2.4%	592
Community Services	15	1.6%	937
Culture, Leisure & Events	6	2.3%	256
Economic Growth & Development	0	0.0%	210
Finance & Business Services	4	1.6%	250
HR, Legal & Communications	4	5.8%	73
Xentrall Shared Services	5	3.1%	160
Grand Total	73	2.3%	3,161

- 4.11 The 'ethnicity by grade' chart (below) identifies if BME staff are concentrated at a particular level – the graphic shows that representation is around what would be expected in relation to the overall staff levels within each grade bracket.

Grade	Actual BME	Expected BME in % to grade profile	Grand Total
Apprentice - NJC E	18	26	1,104
NJC F - NJC H	15	18	766
NJC I - NJC K	24	17	724
NJC L – NJC N	13	9	397
NJC O – NJC Q	3	2	107
SM4 - 1	0	1	47
Chief Officer	0	0	16
Grand Total	73	73	3,161

- 4.12 HR Officers stated that they were not aware of any reported criticism of SBC for not being representative of the Borough (no formal response received following the publication of the *Workforce Equality Information Report 2016-2017*), but re-iterated that the Council are nevertheless committed to increasing workforce diversity.


Disclosing Ethnicity

- 4.13 Equality monitoring forms are sent to applicants as part of the recruitment process. Completion of the form is voluntary, and as at 30th September 2018, 6.4% of the workforce had not made a declaration as to their ethnicity. The reasons for applicants / employees not declaring their ethnicity is not known, but there may be situations where an employee has not actually been asked to declare (e.g. on a TUPE transfer in to the Council).
- 4.14 The Employee Survey, undertaken every two years, also asks the respondent to disclose their ethnicity, but again, individuals can choose not to do this.

The Council acknowledge that further thinking around how and when ethnicity information can be gathered is required.

- 4.15 The Committee queried why some people do not declare their ethnicity. HR Officers felt there could be a variety of reasons, but hoped that people do not think that the Council would misuse this information. Clarity around the reasons why the Council request this may help, as would the provision of paper forms where employees may not have access to a computer (e.g. staff away from a traditional office-base).
- 4.16 Mindful of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), it was noted that these requirements are one of the factors why some staff are 'undeclared', as the Council cannot force individuals to disclose their ethnicity. To encourage people to declare, it was widely felt that the Council needs to ensure it is very clear about why it is asking for information and what it will be used for. Easy read 'what do you want to know that for' (diversity data) is accessible and could be circulated as part of any data-gathering process.

Take Accountability



A roadmap
to success

Senior executives must take accountability by:

- *Ensuring executive sponsorship for key targets;*
- *Embedding diversity as a Key Performance Indicator;*
- *Participating in reverse mentoring schemes to share experience and improve opportunities;*
- *Being open about how they have achieved success, in particular Chairs, CEOs and CFOs in their annual reports.*

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

Corporate Oversight

- 4.17 Executive sponsorship and accountability can be demonstrated by the inclusion of the objective 'to recruit and retain a diverse workforce' in the Council Plan, and regular reports which are considered and shared with Members, Trade Unions, CMT and Directorates.
- 4.18 In addition, the Council's Chief Executive was invited to a BME Staff Forum meeting in December 2017 where the role of the Forum and issues affecting the BME workforce were discussed. The Forum accepted the Chief Executive's invitation to consider issues regarding recruitment and retention of the BME workforce – this has resulted in a draft Action Plan proposed by the Forum.

Raise Awareness

A roadmap
to success

All employers must raise awareness of diversity issues by:

- *Ensuring unconscious bias training is undertaken by all employees;*
- *Tailoring unconscious bias training to reflect roles – e.g. workshops for executives;*
- *Establishing inclusive networks;*
- *Providing mentoring and sponsorship.*

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

Staff Training

4.19 All Council employees attend a compulsory Equality and Diversity course (revised in 2017) every five years, and there is a requirement for all new starters to attend this course within 12 months of joining the Council. Also available to staff is a free online e-learning module from ACAS and bespoke Equality and Diversity training for Social Workers (provided by the Council's Senior Cohesion and Diversity Officer, this offers more specific and timely training for staff dealing with new cases or wanting to increase understanding of different cultures).

Equality Staff Forums

4.20 The Council has four active staff forums (LGBT, Young Persons, Disability and BME) that meet regularly and do much to support workers with these characteristics. The Action Plan for 2017-2018 contained within the Council's Workforce Equality Information Report 2016-2017 included an action around supporting these staff forums and arranging a showcase event for them in 2017 to promote their work, and encourage engagement and new membership. This event took place, as did one in 2018.

BME Staff Forum (see 'Learning from within' (page 20) for more details)

4.21 The Council's BME Staff Forum currently has around 30 members (out of the 73 declared BME staff) and meets on a quarterly basis. The current Chair of the Forum (who has been in place for 18 months, but has been a Forum member for a number of years) felt that progress in relation to BME recruitment and retention had been historically difficult. As such, there was a desire by Forum members to become more involved in the Council Plan in order to help progress the ambition of increasing the diversity of the Council's workforce.

Examine Recruitment

A roadmap
to success

HR directors must critically examine recruitment processes by:

- *Rejecting non-diverse shortlists;*
- *Challenging educational selection bias;*
- *Drafting job specification in a more inclusive way;*
- *Introducing diversity to interview panels;*
- *Creating work experience opportunities for everyone, not just the chosen few.*

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

Data

4.22 The Council holds data on the number of applications received for each post, and information is recorded on all nine protected characteristics (Age, Gender, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Religion or Belief, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity). With regards BME recruitment, the following table was provided for the year 1st October 2017 – 30th September 2018.

	Total	BME	% BME
Applications Received	4,758	283	5.9%
Invited to Interview	1,479	79	5.3%
Appointed	266	5	1.9%

The below table refers to applicants who did not declare their ethnicity for the year 1st October 2017 – 30th September 2018.

	Number Applicants	Not Disclosed Applicants	% Not Disclosed
Applications Received	4,758	170	3.6%
Invited to Interview	1,479	50	3.4%
Appointed	266	5	1.9%

The above information is new data that has been collated following a request by the BME Staff Forum – work has now begun to dig deeper into this.

BME Engagement

- 4.23 All Council job opportunities are advertised on the Council website and through the North East Jobs portal. In addition, Catalyst's (the leading voice of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector in Stockton-on-Tees) e-bulletin includes a link to the Council's jobs page.
- 4.24 Other engagement takes place through existing events (i.e. volunteer markets) and targeted organisations (i.e. Hilton Hotel jobs shared with the North East Migration Partnership (NEMP)). It is acknowledged that more could be done in these areas.

Recruitment Process

- 4.25 As well as compulsory Equality and Diversity training for all Council employees every five years, compulsory recruitment training is provided for those involved in the appointment of new staff. Both of these courses are currently being updated in line with good practice procedures, and it is acknowledged that future training should ensure the issue of 'unconscious bias' is addressed.
- 4.26 The Committee asked if anything can be done with colleges to improve employability and readiness for work. In response, it was noted that the Council does offer additional help for people applying for its jobs, and could certainly look at how and when that support is provided. SBC Learning & Skills are aware of Council vacancies and also provide good courses which help potential applicants. The Committee was informed of 12 recent work placements to the Council from Riverside College, 8 of which were from BME individuals.
- 4.27 It was suggested that whilst individuals within some BME communities would aim much higher than SBC, and even the Borough itself, these communities may be unaware of the range of Council services and job roles it offers (particularly professional occupations). Making the Council a realistic option for BME job seekers is the challenge, and a focus on the younger generation in terms of advertising the role of the Council and opportunities via work experience, work placements, apprenticeships was proposed.
- 4.28 The significant backdrop of cuts to Council resources over recent years which has affected recruitment of any staff, whether of BME origin or not, was highlighted. As a result, SBC has withdrawn from job fairs in recent times due to being less active in recruitment.
- 4.29 The notion of rejecting non-diverse shortlists was considered, though it was felt that the McGregor-Smith Review (2017) was not necessarily advocating that shortlists *should* include diverse candidates; more that all applicants should be viewed the same, and no distinction should be made in terms of ethnicity.
- 4.30 Acknowledging the drive for the Council's workforce to be more representative of the Borough's working population, the Committee noted that a higher BME staff ratio does not necessarily lead to increased representation

as staff may not actually live in Stockton-on-Tees itself. HR Officers stated that the Council wants to recruit the best people, regardless of where they live, though recognises that there are benefits from employing people who reside in the Borough (e.g. proud workforce, shared experiences, getting additional feedback from staff on service quality and potential improvements).

Change Processes

A roadmap
to success

Responsible teams must change processes to encourage greater diversity by:

- *Being transparent and fair in reward and recognition;*
- *Improving supply chains;*
- *Being open about how the career pathway works.*

(McGregor-Smith Review, 2017)

Equal Pay Audit

4.31 As noted previously, the Council conducted an Equal Pay Audit in 2016 which involved comparing the pay of protected groups who are doing equal work in the organisation for National Joint Council, Chief Officer and Soulbury terms and conditions. The race pay gap for all employee contracts is 7.7% in favour of BME employees.

Retention of BME Staff

4.32 Data on the reasons staff left the Council (1st April 2011 – 30th September 2018) was shared – this is something the Council are continually monitoring to identify any specific issues.

As can be seen by the graphic below, there is nothing standing out in relation to BME leavers, which are consistent with the overall percentage of BME employees. However, a significant number of staff left at the end of their contracts who had not previously declared their ethnicity (22.9%).

Leaving Category	BME	Undeclared	White	Number of Leavers
Dismissals	0.6%	5.9%	93.5%	169
Other	1.5%	5.6%	92.9%	266
Redundancy	2.4%	3.5%	94.0%	735
Retirement	0.6%	1.3%	98.1%	318
End of Contract	2.9%	22.9%	74.3%	140
Voluntary Resignations	2.3%	7.1%	90.6%	1,220
Grand Total	2.0%	6.1%	91.9%	2,848

Progression of BME Staff

- 4.33 Data on BME progression (promotion, advancement, training) is not currently available (this is not gathered for any specific groups), but could be produced in the future if required. Whilst there are no reasons to suggest any particular progression issues for BME staff, responses to the latest Employee Survey 2018 (see paragraph 4.40) from BME staff showed that only just over half of respondents were satisfied with the opportunities they had to progress at SBC (7% less when compared with all respondents across the whole Council).

Learning from within

BME Staff Forum

- 4.34 As previously highlighted, the BME Staff Forum accepted the Chief Executive's invitation to consider issues regarding recruitment and retention of the BME workforce. The Forum subsequently discussed a number of key aspects including:

- Whether it is important to have a diverse workforce whilst recognising the Council's statutory responsibilities?
- Whether existing BME employees were taking responsibility for their own development through existing opportunities such as the Council's 'Talent Network'? (note: part of the SBC culture is that all Council employees are responsible for their own development)
- BME workforce is lots of different communities, so a one-size-fits-all approach may be ineffective.
- Wary of how the project could be perceived by others – wanted to focus on retaining and employing the best candidate for a job role, but ensuring the BME workforce had the same opportunities to apply / develop.

- 4.35 As with this scrutiny review, the Forum considered recruitment and workforce data (e.g. were the Council receiving applications from those within the BME community, were they being selected for interview?). Information was also obtained from services who work directly with children and young adults regarding careers, and the Forum discussed the needs of the community and where jobs could be advertised to ensure the Council's employment opportunities reach all of the people of the Borough (e.g. places of worship).

BME Staff Forum – (Draft) Action Plan (Sep 18 – Aug 19)

- 4.36 Following consideration of the above, the BME Staff Forum has recently devised a draft Action Plan (circulated to the Committee and attached at Appendix 2) with two main aims and a number of associated actions:

- 1) To increase and improve the recruitment of new BME employees.
 - Monitor progress towards the Council's targets.
 - Identify and promote SBC at job fairs – *a lot of work has been done internally, but there is a greater need to advertise the Council more outwardly.*
 - Ensure diverse stories and images are represented externally (e.g. through Stockton News) – *chance to show the culture of the Council's workforce and potential employment opportunities.*

- Identify gaps in recruitment data and understand how this can be improved – *at what stage of the recruitment process are BME applicants being unsuccessful; where is the problem?*
 - For a number of interview panels to have representatives from BME staff forum on panel – *promote a diverse image even at the interview stage (could address ‘unconscious bias’)*.
 - Ensure all apprenticeships include a minimum of 6% applications from BME community.
 - Set up new advertising routes for all vacancies to ensure more targeting and links with BME communities – *for BME (or other) job seekers, the internet is not always the default place to go to find vacancies.*
- 2) To develop and support a diverse workforce by retaining and supporting the progression of existing BME staff.
- Encourage and promote BME employees to access and engage with opportunities available through Talent Network and Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) – *though not everyone involved with the BME Staff Forum is part of the Talent Network, and are therefore unaware of some opportunities.*
 - Identify the support that can be offered to existing BME employees to achieve and fulfil their potential – *coaching, mentoring (some BME Staff Forum members have undertaken such opportunities already).*
 - Identify further training opportunities on equality and diversity for managers involved in recruitment.
 - Employee Survey:
 - Produce BME analysis of the Employee Survey results.
 - Respond to any issues identified.
 - BME Staff Forum to encourage completion of Employee Survey.
 - Ensure all new employees are provided with details of the Staff Forums – *this is being advertised by the Chief Executive during Corporate Inductions, and has resulted in new members joining.*
 - Ensure more diverse stories and images are represented internally (i.e. KYIT (weekly staff bulletin)).
 - BME staff to support and promote ‘Show Racism the Red Card’ campaign.
 - SMT and Service Managers engage with the BME Staff Forum as a conduit and consultation forum for developing policies, service changes and support Council-wide activity – *Forum has a lot of expertise regarding culture and diversity, and is there to assist the Council with relevant policies and procedures.*

BME Staff Forum – Visit to Quarterly Meeting (December 2018)

4.37 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 (see Appendix 3). Key discussion points in relation to this review included:

- 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'.

4.38 A number of suggestions were put forward to advertise the Council to BME communities including a poster / social media campaign (similar to the SBC 'Be a Councillor' concept) to promote job roles currently filled by BME staff (images of staff who might be used in promotional material should be *diverse*, rather than just BME). Supporting existing BME staff through mentoring opportunities and the promotion of BME Staff Forum membership by Senior Managers was also discussed.

4.39 Reflecting on the data the BME Staff Forum had requested around applications, shortlisting and appointments of BME individuals (see paragraph 4.22), it was felt that the Council should be asking interviewees about how the process was and whether anything could be improved.

Employee Survey 2018

4.40 From a corporate perspective, it was also noted that the deadline for responses to the latest Council Employee Survey (undertaken every two years) had recently passed and analysis was 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, particularly within the 'we are valued, trusted and supported' section which elicited agreement / strong agreement with the statements '*My immediate manager / supervisor treats me with respect as an individual*' (95%) and '*I am treated with fairness and respect in this organisation*' (86%).
- Some elements of the survey saw lower satisfaction responses from BME staff when compared to the overall workforce – these included '*I am satisfied with the opportunities I have to progress in this organisation*' (7% lower) and '*In the last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and develop*' (6% lower).

4.41 The Committee asked if there had been any issues around hate crime towards BME staff. The BME Staff Forum operates an environment where employees can share issues within a safe place, and there have been no reported concerns regarding any hate crime incidents towards BME staff. A Hate Crime group also exists, but no issues have been reported there either.

The Big Committee (formerly Stockton Youth Assembly)

4.42 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:

4.43 *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 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).

4.44 *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.

4.45 *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 (Facebook and Instagram a key part of The Big Committee as these platforms link 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

- 4.46 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:
- 4.47 *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.
- 4.48 *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).
- 4.49 *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.
- 4.50 Catalyst Multicultural Forum representatives informed the Committee that they were very keen to continue the conversations around these issues following the completion of this review. It was also noted that Catalyst manage the ‘Stockton Volunteers’ website, and will be focusing on BME communities in the New Year (2019).
- 4.51 Reflecting on the recent trend of Local Authorities cutting jobs rather than recruiting, the perception within the Catalyst Multicultural Forum has been that

austerity has meant no opportunities. The Committee agreed that when employment opportunities do arise, the Council could take advantage of when established BME groups come together to sell itself and the roles it employs.

North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)

4.52 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.

4.53 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)

4.54 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.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

- 5.1 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has demonstrated a commitment to increasing the diversity of its workforce and making it more representative of the population it serves. Whilst this is reflected in its Council Plan (and indeed brought about this very review), SBC acknowledge that despite various approaches over recent years, the percentage of BME staff in the Council's workforce remain static and therefore below its stated aim for the diversity of its workforce to be representative of the Borough's working population.
- 5.2 The effects of austerity, both in terms of its impact on Local Authority recruitment and the perceptions of Council employment opportunities, cannot be understated. The Committee noted the significantly reduced SBC workforce when compared to March 2011, and although the ethnicity profile has remained consistent in recent years, it is highly likely that for many people (including those from a BME background), seeking work within a Council was not viewed as a realistic option. This was reflected in some of the evidence received via the Catalyst Multicultural Forum which includes BME community group representation.
- 5.3 When analysing the workforce data, the Committee were mindful that the prevalence of 'undeclared' ethnicity disclosures may be distorting the actual numbers of BME staff the Council employs. Whilst it cannot be assumed that the number of undeclared ethnicities would significantly alter the current workforce diversity picture, more needs to be done to encourage staff (and applicants to SBC) to disclose their ethnicity, so the Council can reflect with greater certainty how representative it really is. This, of course, should be undertaken in a sensitive manner, with clarity provided on why such information is being sought, and how it will be used.
- 5.4 The McGregor-Smith Review (2017) emphasises the importance of Senior Executive accountability. It is to be welcomed that the SBC Chief Executive initiated the BME Staff Forum's work on increasing the Council's workforce diversity and promotes the Forum as part of the Corporate Induction for new starters. However, as seen in the 'ethnicity by directorate' information presented to the Committee, there are differences in BME staff representation across all Council departments, and the reasons for this should be explored further.
- 5.5 Regarding recruitment, the Committee were struck by the data presented on the numbers of BME applicants, those applicants subsequently invited to interview, and those appointed (when compared to the total numbers of applicants, interviews and appointments). The percentages for applications and interviews were very positive (over 5%), but the number of actual appointments was much lower (less than 2%). The Committee note that work is underway to examine the reasons for this, and factors such as interview panel diversity and interviewer training (i.e. eliminating 'unconscious bias') should be considered and addressed. Some form of interview evaluation should also be implemented to allow applicants to comment on the interview process which may identify areas for improvement.
- 5.6 Whilst existing engagement mechanisms with the BME community were outlined, the fact that numbers of BME staff remain static point to a required change of approach when attempting to increase workforce diversity.

Acknowledging that resources are not as abundant as in previous times, the Committee heard on several occasions the need for the Council to sell itself more in terms of what it does and what job roles it offers. This is particularly relevant when considering the longer-term workforce, namely, younger people, some of whom provided their views on working for the Council, and have not considered this as an option, are unaware of potential Local Authority careers, or are put off by perceived political associations. Increasing the Council's presence at targeted job fairs, engaging with already established BME community groups, and advertising itself and its career pathways within schools (to young people and their parents / carers) would be a positive step forward. The Council should also ensure it promotes itself as an inclusive organisation that accommodates the cultural needs of its staff.

- 5.7 The existence of the BME Staff Forum reflects well on the Council, and the Committee were pleased to hear direct from Forum members on the issues they have experienced in relation to recruitment and retention at SBC. The Forum are proactive and have done much to enhance the diversity of the workforce, not least its draft Action Plan which is thorough and ambitious. The Council should continue to lean on the lived experience of Forum members, and ensure their voice and expertise are a key part of future workforce planning, though care is needed that the Forum (or HR for that matter) are not left solely to attempt to address workforce diversity – this is a corporate-wide responsibility.
- 5.8 SBC are by no means alone in attempting to address their workforce diversity, and many other organisations face similar challenges. This review has not uncovered a specific source of best practice which is seeing improved recruitment of BME individuals, but by assessing the Council against the 'Roadmap to Success' (recommended to organisations in the independent McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – *Race in the workplace*), this work has highlighted aspects where the Council have adopted positive approaches to BME recruitment and retention, as well as areas to build on in pursuit of making its workforce more representative of the Borough's residents.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

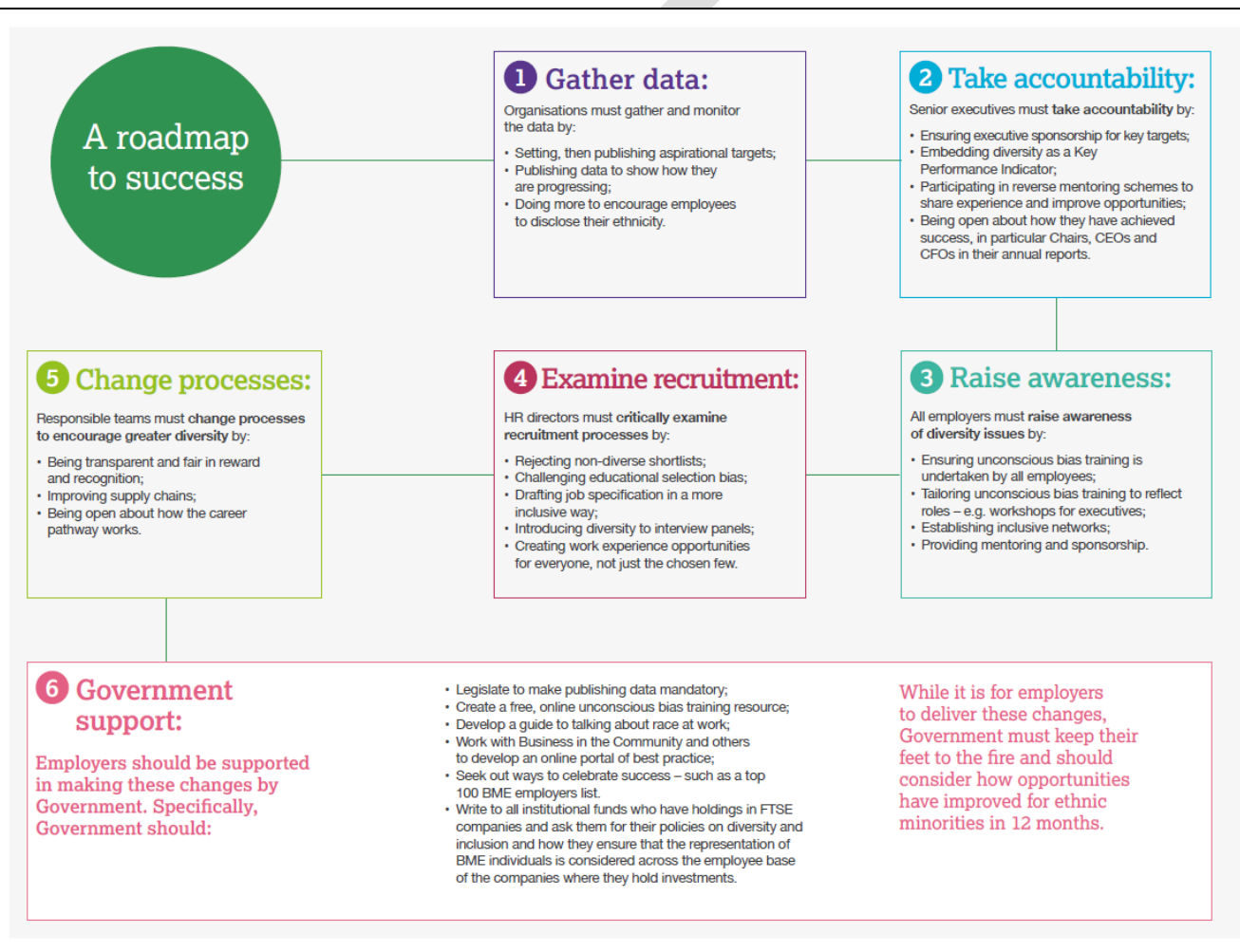
- 1) **Further work be undertaken to investigate and follow-up on undeclared ethnicity of Council staff, ensuring clarity around why the Council is requesting ethnicity data and what it will be used for, and providing a paper copy of the equality monitoring form for those staff not within a traditional office base.**
- 2) **Discussions be held at Senior Management level to understand variances of BME representation across directorates and encourage shared corporate responsibility in increasing workforce diversity. Consideration be given to directorate-specific Action Plans to identify and promote potential employment opportunities to the BME community.**
- 3) **Senior Management should continue to periodically promote all Council staff forums (including the BME Staff Forum) and take positive action to ensure Officers are supported to attend and engage.**
- 4) **Interview evaluation be developed to allow any Council job applicant to comment on the interview process (organisation, documentation, interview panel, questions, etc.) which may identify areas for improvement.**
- 5) **To increase awareness of the Council, what it provides, and potential routes for employment (including apprenticeships, work placements, etc.), SBC promote itself as a diverse employer across a large and varied range of services through multiple mediums (e.g. via social media, in schools / colleges, at targeted job fairs, with established BME community groups).**
- 6) **A poster / social media campaign be developed (similar to 'Be a Councillor') to promote the diversity of the Council's staff and the roles they undertake.**
- 7) **The responses from BME staff to the Employee Survey 2018 are explored, particularly around opportunities to learn, develop and progress.**
- 8) **Subject to a review of who is responsible for each identified action, a final draft BME Staff Forum Action Plan be endorsed by the Council, and the proposed report on progress of this Action Plan be shared with the People Select Committee.**

APPENDIX 1: McGregor-Smith Review (2017) – ‘Roadmap to Success’

I appreciate that in the UK today there are a multitude of economic challenges, and corporate and political requirements for organisations to deliver against or take into consideration.

To enable senior executives to prioritise the recommendations in this review and achieve greater output in the short term, I have created a roadmap to success. This will help busy leaders to focus on the immediate requirements that will enable them to move positively towards a more diverse workforce, while empowering them to plan for the medium term and the associated economic benefits.

- 1 Gather data
- 2 Take accountability
- 3 Raise awareness
- 4 Examine recruitment
- 5 Change processes
- 6 Government support



APPENDIX 2: SBC BME Staff Forum – (Draft) Action Plan (Sept 2018 – Aug 2019)

Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council

Black & Minority Ethnic Staff forum - Action Plan Sept 2018- Aug 2019

This action plan has two aims:

1. To increase and improve the recruitment of new BME employees
2. To develop and support a diverse workforce by retaining and supporting the progression of existing BME staff

The Equality Act 2010 replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplified the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthened the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality. In addition on 1 October 2010, general positive action provisions came into force. These replicated provisions in earlier legislation and allowed employers to target measures such as dedicated training to groups, such as women or people from ethnic minorities, who are under-represented or disadvantaged in the workplace, or to meet their particular needs.

Our Council Plan

Under the theme for 'our Council' there is also a commitment through one of our key objectives to 'Further enhance the diversity of our workforce through recruitment and retention' of under-represented groups.

Our Culture

We deliver services by drawing on our workforce culture – the values and behaviours we have agreed we want to encourage here at the Council.

We are an organisation where we all make a positive contribution at work for the whole Council. Where we never lose sight of the fact we are here to serve the people of the Borough, **therefore we need a representative workforce to ensure that we are able to serve our communities the best that we are able.**

This plan will help deliver on these objectives and support the Council through the above two aims.

A report on progress will be developed after August 2019, to consider progress and what changes have been achieved as a result.

APPENDIX 2: SBC BME Staff Forum – (Draft) Action Plan (Sept 2018 – Aug 2019)

1. To increase and improve the recruitment of new BME employees				
Action	Responsibility	Progress	Deadline	Success will be measured by....
1.To monitor progress towards the Council meeting its BME workforce targets - through HR presenting 6 monthly BME workforce profile updates to the BME staff forum	HR / CMT	Report six monthly on target figure	Ongoing	Progress towards addressing significant gap in the BME workforce and any action necessary
2. To identify and promote SBC at local Job Fairs as an attractive employer of choice.	HR / BME Staff Forum		Mar 19	The number of outreach events/activities held to promote SBC within BME communities
3. Ensure more diverse stories and images are represented Externally - i.e through Stockton News More BME staff related stories externally to promote a more diverse workforce will encourage more applications from the BME community.	Comm's / HR	Ongoing	March 2019	Increased number of applications for vacancies from the BME community.
4. To identify gaps and issues from the recruitment data and understand how this can be improved to reflect the accuracy. For example analyse the difference between unsuccessful applications from the BME community and their white counterparts	HR / BME staff forum	Aug 2019	March 2019	Regular information available to compare successful candidate % from BME candidates vs. white candidates.
5. To ensure a number of interview panels have representatives from the BME staff forum as part of the interview process – priority to be given to service areas which are under-represented in their BME workforce.	HR / BME staff forum	Ongoing	On-going	At least 10 interview panels next year to include representatives from the forum and to ensure such representatives are fully trained in recruitment and selection training
6. To ensure all apprenticeships include a min of 6% applicants from the BME community. (6% reflecting the % of the BME population in the borough).	HR / BME Staff Forum		Dec 18	6% of new apprenticeships from BME community
7.To set up new advertising routes for all vacancies to ensure more targeting and links with BME communities	HR / BME Staff forum			Increase in the BME workforce across SBC

APPENDIX 2: SBC BME Staff Forum – (Draft) Action Plan (Sept 2018 – Aug 2019)

2.To develop and support a diverse workforce by retaining and supporting the progression of existing BME employees.				
Action	Responsibility	Progress	Deadline	Success will be measured by....
1. Encourage and promote BME employees to access and engage with the opportunities available through the Talent Network and SBF.	HR / BME Staff Forum		Mar 19	An increase in those engaged , involved and accessing SBF and Talent network opportunities
2. Identify the support that can be offered to existing BME employees to achieve to fulfil their potential? - Are they applying for promotions when they are advertised? - Are they regularly attending training courses? - Are they progressing as quickly as their white counterparts?	BME Staff Forum		Mar 19	Compare the promotion and progression of BME employees with their white counterparts. Monitor the progression rates for BME staff
3. Identify further training opportunities on equality and diversity for senior management/ recruitment? Are these being accessed?	HR / Staff forum		Mar 19	Percentage of senior managers attending equality and diversity training – both internal and external training
4.Employee Survey - Produce BME analysis of the Employee Survey results. - Respond to any issues identified in the Employee survey undertaken in Oct 2018. - BME staff forum to encourage completion of Employee Survey	HR BME staff forum		Dec 2019	Consider issues and address these through including these within action plan % of Employee surveys completed by BME staff
5. Ensure all new employees are provided details of the staff forums	HR/Comms	Corporate Induction bi-monthly meetings	On-going	Attendance of BME staff at Forum meetings and increased membership

APPENDIX 2: SBC BME Staff Forum – (Draft) Action Plan (Sept 2018 – Aug 2019)

6. Ensure more diverse stories and images are represented <u>internally</u> - i.e. through KYIT to encourage BME employees to pursue promotion opportunities.	Comm's / HR	Ongoing	March 2019	An increase in the number of more BME staff related stories in KYIT.
7. BME staff to support and promote the 'Show Racism the Red Card campaign'.	BME staff forum	Annually	Oct 2018	Campaign success
8. SMT and service managers to engage with the BME staff forum as a conduit and consultation forum for developing policies, service changes and to utilise the forum to support Council wide activity.	SMT / BME staff forum		Aug 2019	Monitor the number of proposed policy / service changes which consult with the BME staff forum.

APPENDIX 3: Site Visit Feedback – BME Staff Forum Quarterly Meeting (Dec 18)

Select Committee Member Visit

Service visited: BME Staff Forum – Quarterly Meeting	
Date of visit: Thursday 13th December 2018	Time of visit: 12.15pm
Details of main contact during visit	
Name: Roisin McKenzie	
Job Title: Solicitor / BME Staff Forum Chair	Tel no:
What did you see?	
One of the quarterly BME Staff Forum meetings in the Ground Floor Conference Room (Municipal Buildings).	
Who did you talk to – staff / service users / family / carers?	
Chair of the BME Staff Forum and four other members of this group.	
What were the key issues arising from the visit?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum has around 30 members (out of 73 BME staff), and meets four times a year. • Forum are keen to be involved in implementing any recommendations that come out of the ongoing scrutiny review. • 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. 	
Any recommendations / feedback for consideration?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring system for BME staff (voluntary scheme) suggested as no BME representation at Service Manager level at present – this may require management training prior to becoming a mentor. • Forum do not have the resources to implement the proposed Action Plan by itself – needs wider support from HR and other directorates (which should be reflected in any agreed final Action Plan). • Senior Management should periodically promote BME Staff Forum membership (and the other three Council staff forums) and ensure Officers are supported to attend and engage. • Need someone to champion this from the top – should manager appraisals address what has been done to tackle workforce diversity (ensuring an awareness of this commitment)? • Poster / social media campaign proposed (similar to ‘Be a Councillor’) to promote job roles currently filled by BME staff. Images of staff who might be used in promotional material should be <i>diverse</i>, rather than just BME (including different ethnicities, ages, genders, etc.). • HR and Communications Team should work on a pop-up and fliers for job fairs (as well as social media). • Interviews – should be asking interviewees about how the process was and could anything be improved. If unsuccessful, could SBC follow up their initial interest (after all, they did apply for a Council job in the first place) to inform of potential opportunities elsewhere within the Council (including work placements)? 	
Signed: Cllr Louise Baldock	Date: 17 th December 2018