

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE  
17 JUNE 2009**

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**MONITORING THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE  
(Director of Corporate Services – Human Resources)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council has a responsibility to promote equality and recognise diversity. Understanding its own workforce and how it relates to the community it serves is an important part of that process.

The Council has legal duties to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote good relations between people. The Council is currently self assessed at level 2 of the Equalities standard. The Council has an action plan to deliver on its equality objectives and is working towards the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government which has replaced the Equality Standard; the Council is inspected against this Framework and will require external verification to meet the 'Achieving' level. Effective workforce monitoring is an essential element of helping to ensure that the Council identifies and removes any potential barriers to employment for any sections of the community.

- 1.2 It is also important that the workforce of the Council reflects the make up of its local community to help to ensure that fair and appropriate services are provided to all residents. The demographic make up of Bracknell Forest is changing, the 2001 Census showed that 5% of the Borough's population was of an ethnic minority, since then there has been a significant growth in minority ethnic communities.

- 1.3 The Bracknell Forest 2008 Schools Census shows that there has been an increase in ethnic minority pupils, as a percentage of the total number of pupils, from 6.1% in 2001 to 14% in 2008, representing more than a doubling in seven years. The largest increase has been in pupils of Asian ethnicity. The population of the borough is also aging, the number of people aged 65+ is expected to increase steadily from its current level of 12,000 to an estimated population of 17,600 in the 65+ age group in 2021.

- 1.4 This annual report contains statistical information on employees and applicants for jobs at the Council in terms of gender, disability, age, religion or belief and ethnicity, to ensure that the Council has a full understanding of the make up of its workforce and to identify what further action needs to be taken to ensure that it represents the local community. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRA) requires the organisation to ethnically monitor the following:

- (i) Numbers of staff in post.
- (ii) Applicants for employment/training/promotion.
- (iii) Numbers receiving training.
- (iv) Performance assessment outcomes.
- (v) Grievance cases

- (vi) Disciplinary cases
  - (vii) Leavers.
- 1.5 Legislation exists to protect employees from discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation and religion or belief. In line with the Equality Standard Action Plan (which is due to be replaced by the Equality Framework Action Plan), data on religion/belief has been collected for the workforce for the first time this year. In December 2008, a personal details checking exercise was carried out for employees, which incorporated a request for details on religion or belief as well as updating other personal information.
  - 1.6 Details on religion or belief are now also being collected from job applicants, but a full year of data is not yet available. Next year the Council will have data on religion or belief for both workforce and job applicants.
  - 1.7 The Government will be introducing a question on sexual orientation in the next full national census in 2011. The Council will continue to monitor the requirements in this area in respect of the duty on the employer. The data is not collected at the present time, in part because until the 2011 Census data is received, there is no benchmark for the community against which to compare the workforce.
  - 1.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) requires information on the ethnicity of the workforce to be available to the public by 31 May each year. Inspection bodies such as CSCI enforce this requirement. This information will therefore already be on the Council's website when the Employment Committee meets.

## **2 THE COUNCIL'S STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Council has had a monitoring system in place for some time to collect figures in relation to its existing workforce and applicants for jobs with the exception of the "promotion" requirement mentioned in 1.4 (ii) above. This is because all posts are filled by open advertisements. Promotion is therefore covered under the general recruitment category for monitoring purposes.
- 2.2 With regard to "Performance Assessment Monitoring" paragraph 1.4 (iv), the EHRC requires information only where a benefit or disadvantage results from the performance assessment. As there is no financial benefit or penalty arising from the Council's appraisal system, there is no requirement to monitor it by ethnicity. Should the system change at any point in the future such that a benefit or disadvantage might arise from the appraisal, an appropriate monitoring system would be investigated.
- 2.3 Human Resources collect a range of statistics on applicants and current employees. These figures, attached as Appendix A show the following;
  - (i) recruitment information from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 split by ethnicity, age, gender and disability of applicants.
  - (ii) workforce information as at 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 split by ethnicity, age, gender, disability and religion or belief.

- 2.4 Following the introduction of a National Indicator Set, central government no longer monitors all of the information previously provided as Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). The Council has decided to continue to monitor these statistics but to make it part of this report in order to set and monitor standards to ensure it meets the Equality Framework.
- (i) Of the top 5% of earners in the organisation, 29.27% were women. This is close to the average of all Councils in England, which is 34.1%.
  - (ii) Of the top 5% of earners in the Council, 1.46% were disabled. This is in accordance with the percentage of staff with a disability in the total Council workforce. The average for all Councils in England is 3.8%, which is higher than the Council.
  - (i) Of the top 5% of earners, 2.98% were from a non-white (BME) background. This is lower than the average for all Councils in England, which is 3.4%.
- 2.5 Although the national data set for the BVPI's has been reduced and therefore no official targets are set for the Council, it is important to continue to monitor the relevant ones on a local level. The expectations for the top 5% of earners by the Chief Officer: HR for 2009/10 are 34.1% female; 2% with a disability and 3.9% who are from a non-white (BME) background.
- 2.6 The Committee should note that the following caveats apply to the information;
- (i) For some indicators, because of the small numbers in the comparator group, a small increase or decrease in the head count can have a disproportionate effect. For example, the top 5% of earners totals 68 staff so 1% represents a 0.68 Full Time Equivalent.
  - (ii) In relation to the recruitment statistics only, none of the returns include schools based staff. Schools have delegated responsibility for recruitment and the collection of recruitment statistics, so are required to undertake the recording of this information. Monitoring of their compliance including reporting annually to their Governing Body is undertaken as part of the routine audit programme of schools.
  - (iii) There may be some discrepancies in numbers on the charts compared to actual numbers of employees/candidates. This is because information on disability, ethnicity and religion/belief is collected by self declared returns from employees and candidates and, as there is no compulsion to return this information, some choose not to (or return selected information only). Information on gender and age are automatically collected as basic employee data.
  - (iv) The information relating to the economically active Bracknell population by ethnicity is from the 2001 Census, and has been quoted as a comparison with the workforce statistics in this report. "Economically active" means the population aged between 16 and 65 who are working, self employed, registered unemployed or full time students, but excludes those who are permanently sick and disabled, those who are looking after the home or family members, or those who have retired. This should make a comparison with the workforce at

the Council reasonably appropriate. However, as with all Census data, the information on the Bracknell Population is almost ten years out of date – the next Census is due in 2011.

- (v) The recruitment statistics show the activity level over the year of 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 as recorded by the recruiting departments.
- (vi) Departmental year on year comparisons are not as helpful this year as reorganisation has altered the composition and size of the departments. In April 2008, the Council reduced its main departments from 4 to 3, so there is no direct comparison with the previous year. Whole workforce comparisons are more reliable.
- (vii) Training course information relates to internal courses booked through the Corporate Learning and Development team. It does not therefore include, for example, external courses, courses booked directly by departments, longer courses such as a degree in Social Work or Diploma in Human Resource Management, courses undertaken through day release arrangements. The statistics relate to the training places taken up and it should be noted that the same person undertaking more than one training event will therefore appear in the statistics more than once.

### 3. GENDER

#### 3.1 The highlight statistics for Gender are as follows:

- (i) A significant majority of the Council's employees are female (78%) compared to male (22%) which reflects little change on previous years' figures. This pattern has remained very stable over the last few years and is typical of local government in the UK. The number of female employees is still greatest in Social Care and Learning (85%), which is an amalgamation of the former Education, Children's Services and Libraries and Social Services and Housing departments. Education and care are occupations which tend to attract larger numbers of women than men nationally. Corporate Services and Environment, Culture and Communities are closer to a 50/50 split, with figures of 61% and 57% being female respectively, although the amount of female employees in these departments are steadily increasing each year.
- (ii) 64% (last 2 years 71%) of applicants for jobs with the Council are female, so the proportion of male applicants has increased by 7% in the last year, which could be due in part to the current economic climate. The department which attracted the largest proportion of female applicants was Social Care and Learning with 83%.
- (iii) 70% (last year 75%) of the successful applicants for all jobs with the Council were female, which is broadly consistent with the number of applicants but slightly reduced on the previous year.
- (iv) Of the leavers, 76% (67% last year) were female and 24% (33% last year) were male, this is very similar to the workforce comparison, but a marked change from last years figures. This could be another result

of the current economic climate. The figures will be monitored again next year to see if the trend continues.

- (v) 78% of training course places arranged through Corporate Learning and Development were taken up by female employees, which is the same as the composition of the workforce.
- (vi) Out of 50 employees studying for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) this year, 45 (90%) were female. This is a high percentage, but reflects the large number of trainees from a care background and with an administrative background, both of which are occupations mainly filled by women.

### 3.2 Gender Summary

The proportion of male to female employees remains fairly steady, but with some indication that the number of male applicants is rising slightly. There is no specific target for the number of male or female employees in the workforce but the proportion of male to female employees in the workforce is consistent with the national workforce composition as recorded by the LGA's Local Government Workforce Overview. However, the percentage of females in the top 5% of earners is lower than the proportion of females in the workforce and there is a target to increase the percentage. The Council is still slightly below the national average for Councils in England (34%) in this respect and our current target is designed to at least equal it.

## 4. **AGE**

### 4.1 The highlight statistics for age are as follows:

- (ii) The Council's workforce up to the age of 29 is 17% with 2% of those being under the age of 19, however, the past year has seen both of these age groups increase. 6% of staff are over 60 and 1% over 65, even though employees have the opportunity to work beyond retirement age. The main body of staff are aged between 30 to 39 (21%), 40 to 49 (29%) and 50 to 59 (26%).
- (iii) The Council has low numbers of applicants for vacancies under the age of 19 (6.5%) and over the age of 60 (1.5%). The higher numbers of applicants were aged between 20 to 29 (36.3%), 30 to 39 (25%), 40 to 49 (19.3%) and 50 to 59 (11.5%). The age ratios have changed in the past year with a higher percentage of younger people applying for positions within the Council. As part of the Council's recruitment strategy, Modern Apprentices are actively being recruited. Also the Council advertises all of its jobs widely on the web and younger people tend to use this when searching for vacancies.
- (iii) The ages of the successful candidates are similar to the numbers of applicants in each age band, however, the numbers of successful candidates under the age of 19 has risen from 2% in 2007/8 to 5.5% this year. The percentage of successful applicants between the age of 60 and 65 has dropped to 0.5% and of candidates over 65 was also 0.5%. There was in fact only one person over the age of 65 who applied for a position at the Council last year and they were successful.

The higher numbers of successful candidates are aged 20 to 29 (30%), 30 to 39 (24.4%), 40 to 49 (25.3%) and 50 to 59 (13.8%).

- (iv) Of the Council's leavers, 2.5% were under 19 years of age, 24% aged between 20 to 29, 26% between 30 to 39, 18% aged between 40 to 49, 14.5% between 50 to 59, 11% between 60 to 65 and 4% were over 65 years. Compared to the workforce, this shows that a higher percentage of 20 to 39 year olds are leaving the Council, whilst between 40 to 59, a higher percentage are staying. This is a marked change, as the figures last year were much more proportional compared to the workforce. It seems that those in the 40 to 59 age band are more inclined to remain in the Council's employment, again that may be due to the difficult economic climate.
- (v) The ages of employees who take up training courses is very similar to the work force figures. Again, low numbers under the age of 29 (16%) and particularly under the age of 19 (2%) with only 7% being over 60 years old, with 1% of those being over 65. Staff aged between 30 to 39 (20%), 40 to 49 (28%) and 50 to 59 (29%) are the main attendees on the internally run courses.
- (vi) Of the employees studying for NVQs, 10% were 19 or under; 22% were 20-29; 12% were 30-39; 33% were 40-49; 21% were 50-59; and 2% 60 or over.

#### 4.2 Age Summary

The LGA's Local Government Workforce Overview gives percentages of employees by age bands working in councils in England. 38% of Bracknell Forest Council employees are under the age of 39, compared with the national average of 34.8%. 29 % of Council employees are between the age of 40 and 49 compared with 31.3% nationally and 25% of Council employees are between 50 and 59 compared with 25.5% nationally. Employees over the age of 60 (7%) are slightly less well represented at Bracknell Forest compared to the 8.5% nationally.

These figures suggest that the Council is broadly in line with national comparators, with slightly higher than average under 39 workforce and a slightly lower than average over 60 workforce.

Measures have already been put in place to allow individuals to continue in employment beyond 65, where appropriate. Other measures to improve age diversity of job applications including using the web, particularly Web 2.0 to advertise job vacancies and reach a younger audience.

### 5. **DISABILITY**

5.1 The highlight statistics for disability are as follows:

5.2 The published Census information indicates that 3% of the population of Bracknell Forest aged 16-65 are either permanently sick or disabled, and are not considered part of the economically active population. No census figure is

available for disabled people who are part of the working population in the Bracknell Forest area.

- (i) 1.7% (1.4% last year) of the Council's workforce declared themselves as having a disability.
- (iii) 0.5% of applicants for jobs at the Council declared themselves as having a disability, which is considerably lower than the 1.8% last year.
- (iv) Three disabled applicants were successful in gaining employment with the Council (1%) compared to 6 applicants (2%) last year. Although this is not a high proportion, it is reflective of the total applicants with a disability.
- (v) Of leavers, 1.52% had declared a disability, which is a reduction compared to 2.2% last year.
- (vi) 2% of training places were taken by those who declared a disability, which is slightly higher than the workforce composition.
- (vii) 4% of those studying for NVQs had a disability.

### 5.3 Disability Summary

The proportion of disabled employees in the Council is lower than that in the Bracknell Forest population shown in the census. This is likely to be due to the fact that not all disabled people in the Bracknell Forest population may be seeking employment. It is not clear whether applicants feel that declaring a disability may hinder their application for a job, and therefore may not declare that they are disabled on their application forms. However, the Council does publicise that it meets the "two tick" disability standard which welcome applications from the disabled. The Council remains committed to the "two tick" disability system.

The percentage of disabled employees in the top 5% of earners is 1.46%, which is comparable to the workforce generally. It is difficult to determine how many disabled employees are in the Local Government workforce generally. Statistics suggest that in the South East of England some 36% of employees have some form of health problems but no data is available on how many of these consider themselves to have a disability.

## 6. ETHNICITY

6.1 The highlight statistics for ethnicity are as follows:

6.2 For the purposes of this report, “non white ethnic origin” includes all the categories except “White British” and “white other”. For the purposes of comparison, the economically active population of the Bracknell Forest area as described in the 2001 Census had 90% of white British, 5% of other white ethnic origin and 5% of non-white ethnic origin.

- (i) Across the workforce, of those who declared their ethnicity, 3.9% said they have a non-white ethnic origin (compared to 3.6% last year), 4.1% (3.5% last year) declare they have other white ethnic origin and 91.9% (92.8% last year) declare they have a white British ethnic origin. It would seem that the trend of non-white ethnic origin in the workforce is moving gradually upwards, to become more reflective of the general population, although there is still a gap. The number of applicants of a non-white ethnic origin (below) is encouraging in this respect as it is higher than the proportions in the current workforce.
- (ii) 14.9% of applicants declared themselves as having a non-white ethnic origin compared to 16.8% last year. 6.2% of applicants declared themselves as having a white other ethnic origin, which is similar to the 6.6% declared last year.
- (iii) 4.2% (last year 7.8%) of successful applicants are of non-white ethnic origin and 5.6% (6.3% last year) are of other white ethnic origin. In a previous year, where a similar divergence between the number of BME applicants and the number of successful BME applicants was noted, an audit was conducted. It was found that there were a large proportion of BME applicants who did not meet the essential criteria of the person specification and therefore were not successful. The difference was therefore objective and not due to bias by the selection panels. It is suggested that a study of the 08–09 BME applicants is now conducted to see if the same reason still applies.
- (iv) Of those leavers who declared their ethnicity, 4.96% were from a non-white ethnic group (4% last year). A further 4.7% (5.2% last year) of leavers declared themselves as having other white ethnic origin. Much of the workforce have been employed by the Council for many years, and started when the workforce was less ethnically diverse. One possible explanation for the figure being slightly higher than last year is that employees recruited in the last few years have been more ethnically diverse. It is a recognized phenomenon that many leavers come to an organization and then move on after a few years – the non white leavers in this sample typically do not have very long service – their ethnicity is therefore more reflective of the percentages we currently recruit, rather than of the whole workforce including longer serving employees.

- (v) For the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 there were a total of 3394 placements on internal training courses, although the way the statistics are gathered may mean that the same person may have attended more than one training course. 89% were White British and 7% from a non-white ethnic background and 4% from a white other ethnic origin. This seems to indicate that non-white groups are getting fair access to training within the Council.
- (vi) Out of the employees completing NVQs in 2008/9 who declared their ethnic origin, 85% were White British, 6.5% White Other, and 8.5% were non-white.

### 6.3 Ethnicity Summary

The proportion of non-white employees working in the Council is still lower than that in the Bracknell Forest population, as measured by the 2001 Census and on current estimates as exemplified by the School Census 2006; the target should be to mirror the population. The Council is successfully attracting and recruiting a higher percentage of non-white applicants than are seen in the current workforce, however, as attrition rates often are highest amongst people with lower lengths of service, there is also a similar percentage leaving the organisation. This means that the net change in overall workforce composition is happening quite slowly.

The percentage of non-white employees in the top 5% of earners is 2.9%, which is less than the percentage in the workforce generally. The average for Councils in England is a little higher at 3.4%. Our target should be to at least equal the average.

## 7. **RELIGION/BELIEF**

- 7.1 The highlight statistics for religion/belief are as follows:
- 7.2 The Council has a duty to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of religion and belief and it is likely to be proposed in the forthcoming Equality Bill that public bodies will have a duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to religion and belief. The Council has therefore collated figures on the workforce for religion/belief to ensure that we have a better understanding of the make up of our workforce. The Office for National Statistics publishes a breakdown of religion or belief for the Bracknell Forest area, however this information was collected through the Census in 2001 and statistics for today's more diverse population may have changed considerably.
- 7.3 For the purposes of comparison, the figures in brackets show the population of the Bracknell Forest area in 2001. Although the figures for 2009 are not available, they are likely to be significantly changed from 2001.
  - (i) Across the workforce, of those who declared their religion/belief, 0.4% (0.28%) said their religion was Buddhist, 71.8% (72.1%) said their religion was Christian, 0.3% (0.17%) said their religion was Jewish, 0.6% (0.68%) said their religion was Muslim and 0.4% (0.19%) said their religion was Sikh. 4.6% (0.29%) employees declared that they had another religion/belief and 21.9% (17.96%) employees stated that they had no religion/belief. As shown above, these figures are very

comparable to the wider population at the time of the last Census. However, the Census figures are 8 years old and may have changed fairly dramatically today. A significantly higher proportion of staff declared that they had another religion or belief than the 2001 census.

- (ii) Of the employees studying for NVQs who declared their religion/belief, 52% were Christian, 4% Buddhist, 13% gave their religion as Other and 31% said they had no religion/belief.
- (iii) Of those attending training courses who declared their religion/belief, 67.7% were Christian, 1.3% Buddhists, less than 1% Jewish and less than 1% Muslim; 30% said they had no religion.
- (iv) As information on the religion/belief of the workforce was only collected towards the end of last year, the religion/belief of those who left the authority in the earlier part of the year is not known. For this reason, a statistic on the ethnicity of leavers over the whole of the year is not available, but the statistic on the coming year's leavers will be available for the next report.
- (v) The Council should reasonably expect its workforce to reflect the profile of the community it serves which the recently collected information from employees does.

#### 7.4 Religion/Belief Summary

Religion/belief is a new indicator, only adopted this year and therefore statistics are not available in all categories monitored. There appears to be little comparative information available across Local Government to set targets against. However, we do have information on religion and belief in the population from the 2001 census, so we will strive to work towards being representative of those population figures.

### 8. **GRIEVANCES AND DISCIPLINARIES**

- (i) In the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, there were 16 disciplinary cases. None of these cited diversity issues eg racist or sexist behaviour as the basis of the case. 50% of those disciplined were male. Two were 19 or under, 4 were 20-29, 2 were 30-39, 4 were 40-49, and 4 were 50-59. Only one was of a non-white ethnic origin. None were disabled.
- (ii) In the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 there were 4 grievances lodged. None of these cited diversity issues eg racist or sexist behaviour as the basis of the case although one related to an equal pay claim which is based on the Sex Discrimination Legislation. All the complainants were female, between the ages of 50 and 59, and White British. None had a disability. The group of those who have grievances has been more diverse previously, so we monitor to see if this becomes a trend or if it is a coincidence based on a small sample.

### 9. **CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 This is the eighth year of collecting statistical information on the workforce and applicants for Council vacancies.
- 9.2 The economic downturn appears to have had an effect on the recruitment figures, with a higher amount of younger people applying for jobs at the Council and being successfully recruited. There has also been an increase in male applicants and males being recruited which is reflected in the work force figures. It is possible that this reflects a lack of private sector opportunities for those groups.
- 9.3 The Council has put in place the following strategies to ensure that the Equalities Framework is complied with and to move towards achieving our targets. The Council plans to:
- (i) Put in place significant training and development programmes on equalities at all levels throughout the Council. In addition it is supporting this with recruitment training which emphasizes the importance of objectives and fair recruitment and promotes the "Two Tick" system..
  - (ii) Further develop induction training to highlight equalities issues.
  - (iii) Further develop Customer Services training, to include equalities issues and meet the NI14 standard on avoidable contact.
  - (iv) Further develop a Senior Management Competency Framework which has equalities as part of it's requirements.
  - (v) Further develop a competency framework for other levels of managers to ensure that person specifications are free from bias and based on competencies rather than experience or background.
  - (vi) Ensure that the Corporate Pay and Workforce Strategy reflects the key issues arising out of the workforce planning which includes a strong equalities thread.
  - (vii) Further develop the Equalities Action Planning, with particular reference to increasing part-time and job share opportunities.
  - (viii) Develop the skills of HR Advisors in providing advice at the start of the recruitment process, with special attention to promoting reduced hours opportunities and diversity of applications. Emphasis will also be placed on the need to scrutinising person specifications as a means of ensuring the Council does not unfairly restrict the pool of applicants by including criteria which may be biased on potentially discriminatory.
  - (ix) Continue to promote the use of the internet to publicise vacancies to reach the widest audience.
  - (x) Undertake an audit of recruitment (08-09) to discover why the percentage of applicants of non-white origin is not matched by the percentage of non-white applicants recruited.
- 9.4 Bracknell Forest Council has worked hard to achieve good results in the areas outlined in this report and is continuing to strive for improvement year on year. In particular, targets relating to both the workforce in general and to the top 5% of earners specifically have been set and Bracknell Forest Council will work towards achieving these targets.

#### Equalities Impact assessment

Equalities issues are discussed in the report.

Strategic Risk management Issues

No strategic risk issues identified.

Background Papers

None

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