

Committee	Dated:
Establishment Committee	16 September 2020
Subject:	Public
Tackling Racism Taskforce - Staffing Update	
Report of:	For Information
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Summary

This report provides the Establishment Committee with an update relating to employment work priorities arising from the Tackling Racism Taskforce (TRT) at its meeting on 13 July 2020. It provides an overview of the initiatives that have been proposed and being implemented with regards to staffing.

There are seven workstreams that have been agreed for consideration and they include:

- i. Anonymised Recruitment
- ii. Mentoring and reverse mentoring
- iii. Training budgets
- iv. Creating a 'safe space'
- v. Work experience
- vi. Bullying and Harassment Procedure
- vii. Diversity Data (Peer Review)

This is a progress report that gives an update on these workstreams which are being developed to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce; where staff are empowered to fulfil their true potential, in an environment that is free from all types of discrimination.

Recommendations

The Establishment Committee is asked to:

- Note that an increase in training budgets will be required and a more detailed recommendation will be submitted to the Establishment and

Policy and Resources Committees in October 2020.

- Note the development of a new Bullying and Harassment Procedure that will be presented at the October meeting for approval.
- Endorse the Confidential Advisors Scheme being implemented across the City Corporation
- Approve that anonymised recruitment currently in place for senior positions be rolled out across the City of London Corporation at all grades.
- Note that a programme of mentoring and reverse mentoring, as piloted in the Department for Built Environment, is rolled out across the City Corporation in the first instance to staff from the most underrepresented groups.
- Note the proposed peer review/equality challenge of the Equality and Inclusion action plan and performance assessment.

Main Report

Background

1. The Tackling Racism Taskforce held a focused session on staffing on 13 July 2020. Elected Members listened to the experiences of BAME staff working for the City of London Corporation and discussed the types of initiatives that could be endorsed to improve the diversity of the workforce and to enable a more inclusive environment for BAME employees to work and flourish.
2. A report of the Director of HR was submitted to the Tackling Racism Taskforce on 24 July 2020, it contained the following key points:
 - Anonymised recruitment across all grades be introduced
 - Mentoring and reverse mentoring schemes be developed
 - A framework be developed that ensures that all departments allocate budgets for all employees to access their personal development (this is separate from and in addition to budgets for professional and technical training)
 - A scheme is developed that provides and defines a “safe space” for staff and provides clarity on the terms of reference(s) for meetings convened to discuss tackling racism with staff
 - Training is given to key individuals across the organisation who will provide support and guidance for staff on an individual and confidential basis
 - Current and possible schemes that support work experience programmes with schools and young adults is explored and costed.
 - For an HR procedure on bullying and harassment to be developed.
 - Consideration be given as to how the City Corporation can better utilise the collected and published equality data of its workforce to promote and increase diversity (including the introduction of a peer review)

Anonymised recruitment

3. Implemented in 2018, anonymising applications were established for grade I and above; the personal details of all applicants for these roles are withheld at the shortlisting stage. The change to anonymise all recruitment will be a crucial

intervention that will convey a more transparent approach to achieving a diverse workforce at all levels.

4. This process in the past has been a manual task but a recent upgrade to the HR system will now allow the City Corporation to select which stages of the recruitment process it wishes to anonymise. The system is currently being tested and will form part of the revised selection and recruitment policy, which will also include mixed panels and external recruitment wherever possible.

Mentoring and reverse mentoring

5. Mentoring programmes tend to have four key elements: improving performance, career development, guidance and sharing knowledge. Mentoring relationships, especially formal ones organised through a mentoring programme, are often entered into with a defined time limit, or a defined goal. This provides both parties with a structure rather than just agreeing an open-ended commitment.
6. Reverse mentoring programmes tend to be a junior team member entering into a "professional friendship" with someone more senior, and they exchange life experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, an employee from a different background may share details about their social and cultural experiences that has resulted in them having different work ethics, mindsets or attitudes. This relationship affords the mentee the opportunity to listen, reflect and challenge assumptions and stereotypes that may have previously been difficult to overcome, but will benefit the organisation greatly.
7. Having both a mentoring and reverse mentoring programme, recognises that there are skills gaps on both sides, and that each person can address their weaknesses with the help of the other's strengths.
8. Mentoring/reverse mentoring programmes have been piloted in the Department of Built Environment (DBE) with apprentices. To date, this pilot - although in its embryonic stage – has proved successful. It is recommended that this programme is rolled out across the City Corporation in the first instance to staff from the most underrepresented groups and will require a resource to facilitate the matching and monitor the process and a significant training programme for both mentors and mentees.
9. It is also proposed that the current My Mentor scheme, which is available to all staff is extended to also offer reverse mentoring. However this scheme is across London Boroughs so will need agreement of the group.

Training budgets

10. There are both departmental and central training budgets. Departmental training budgets are intended for professional and technical training linked to service delivery. At the outset these were probably linked to headcount but over the years with departmental changes, amalgamations and cost savings these possibly no longer represent the numbers in departments.

11. There is a corporate training budget which provides mandatory training, and a range of leadership, management and 'soft skills' training. This also provides a learning management system (learning pool) which holds a range of e. Learning and support courses.
12. The appraisal system introduced in 2019 takes a developmental approach, it mandates a personal development objective and a number of managers have been trained in holding 'coaching conversations'.
13. Previous appraisal systems did include personal development plans but the use of these was inconsistent and often contained requests for 'first aid training'. The result of this was hundreds of staff training in first aid at a significant cost to the central training budget. The personal development plans/objectives should be collated centrally to inform the roll out of Corporate Training programmes. It is proposed that when budgets are recalibrated in 2021 all departmental training budgets are brought into the central budget for corporate development, including resourcing the reverse mentoring scheme, and professional and technical training is resourced from local risk.
14. The proposal is that all staff would have a personal development allocation which will be used for training that is not necessarily directly related to their role.
15. This allocation will be a challenge to get the right balance. An allocations for example of £500 per person, would cost £2M, and £500 does not buy a lot of training when accessing commercial providers. The cost of Adult Education in local authorities varies it would pay for most adult education courses for a year, most of which are subsidised. If there were some common requests, we could run these centrally at a lower cost.
16. Such an allowance would be unlikely to be able to be funded from the local risk training budgets, if the budgets are amalgamated centrally it might go some way to offsetting this and other initiatives such as managing and training for reverse mentoring.
17. It is possible to consider giving time to each individual rather than a financial amount, but it would still leave the issue of paying for the training itself.
18. A more detailed report will be presented, with a bid for more resources for this budget, to the October meetings of the Establishment Committee.

Creating a safe space

19. Whilst the BAME and other staff networks allow for a safe space for support, it has been highlighted that they are not a safe space for staff to share their experiences where other individuals can be identified. It was therefore suggested that a Confidential Advisor scheme be introduced providing a point of contact for employees concerned about bullying and harassment or any other concerns relating to a protected characteristic and workplace issues. It is not intended that this replaces the day to day relationship between employee and their manager nor is it intended to replace the role of our recognised trade unions.

20. The Confidential Advisors will be a group of employee volunteers who are trained in basic counselling, equality and inclusion and the relevant policies related to unprofessional and inappropriate behaviour. They will provide advice and support to staff who feel they are being subjected to bullying or harassment, have themselves been accused of harassment or bullying or have other concerns about their treatment in the workplace. Their role will be to listen and assist individuals to explore the available options to resolve the issues, no matter how sensitive. They are not intended to replace of HR representatives or professional counsellors. This initiative aligns with our Managing People policies and procedures which encourage early resolution in a non-adversarial way.
21. A more progressed update on the development of the service will be reported back to the Committee.

Work experience

22. The Taskforce were keen for current and possible schemes that support work experience programmes with schools and young adults to be explored and enhanced.
23. Officers in HR are currently exploring reintroducing an enhanced six-week work experience programme for Years 12 and 13 in schools with students of low socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim not only to remunerate these students to increase and encourage take-up of the scheme but to make a real learning and career enhancing experience. A progress update will be reported back to the Committee.

Bullying and Harassment Procedure

24. The City Corporation's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure is currently subject to wider consultation with the staff networks and relevant stakeholders. It outlines our approach to providing bullying and harassment support to staff and managers. It draws attention to the different types of harassment and the possible behaviours that can constitute harassment whilst also highlighting the fact that there is no legal definition of bullying. The procedure will be presented to the October meeting of Establishment Committee for approval..

Diversity Data

25. The City Corporation actively collects and publishes data and information on the diversity of its workforce at all levels. Using this data, it has developed its equality and inclusion corporate and departmental actions plans. However, the Taskforce felt that there needs to be a mechanism in place to critically challenge the cultural and transformational change necessary for driving improvements in BAME representation at all levels, but particularly at senior levels.
26. It is proposed that a peer review/ equality challenge is introduced to provide the City Corporation with a clear understanding of where it is on its journey to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation. Departments will assess

their performance against the Corporate self-assessment template introduced in June 2019. It has six distinct areas of focus:

- Monitoring and the use of data/information
- Completion of Equality Analysis and tackling discrimination/barriers
- Target setting and mainstreaming equalities into performance systems
- Using procurement and commissioning to achieve equality of opportunity
- Engagement, involvement & partnership
- Employment and training

27. The template sets out 24 questions requiring a positive, negative or not applicable score. Under each of the six headings there are four strategic questions which managers are asked to consider within the context of their own service provision.

28. Last year all departments were asked to validate their answers with written supporting evidence that was then presented to the Equality and Inclusion Board where they were challenged on their submissions.

29. An internal peer review will add another level of accountability as all results, will then be scrutinised in an annual challenge session of the Equality and Inclusion Board and an external facilitator. The aim will be to gain an assessment about overall performance of the City Corporation based on areas of strength and specific areas for improvement.

30. Departments who need support to achieve the desired standards will be asked to provide written narrative about how they intend to improve, and this will be included in their updates to the Equality and Inclusion Board. In addition, departments that are 'performing well' will still be asked to identify areas for improvement for the following year.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

31. The proposals contained in this report are all aligned to the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 by contributing to a flourishing society, people having equal opportunities to enrich their lives and fulfil their potential. Particularly for employees from the most under-represented groups across the workforce. This will assist with building a sustainable talent pipeline across the organisation in the future.

Implications

32. A more detailed report will be presented, with a bid for more resources for the training and work experience elements of this report, to the October meetings of Establishment and Policy and Resources Committees.

Conclusion

33. This report outlines the actions that the Tackling Racism Taskforce has proposed that the City Corporation should implement to enable current and future talent to work and thrive within the organisation, without fear of discrimination.

Background Papers

- Non-public 'Tackling Racism at Work' – Report of the Director of HR submitted to the Tackling Racism Taskforce on 24 July 2020, can be obtained from Emma Cunnington, Head of Chairman Support Services.
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