

Committee: Joint Consultative Committee for Ethnic Minorities

Date: 21 October 2009

Agenda item: 7

Wards: All Wards

Subject: Employment of BME staff and actions to improve representation

Lead officer: Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services

Lead member: Councillor Henry Nelles, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement

Key decision reference number: n/a

Recommendations:

- A. That the JCC notes the contents of this report and the actions to improve the representation of BME staff employed by the Council
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1. Purpose of report and executive summary

This report outlines key employment profile data in relation to BME employees and actions in place, together with proposed actions to improve the representation of the BME workforce within the Council.

The report answers three key questions asked by the Committee:

- (i) The number of BME staff employed (see table at paragraph 2 below)
- (ii) The distribution of BME staff across the Council (see appendix 1)
- (iii) Actions taken to improve the representation of BME staff employed by the Council

2. Details

2007/8 to 2009/10 - Employment profile

Year	2007/8 (inc schools)	2008/9 (incl schools)	2009/10 (incl. schools)
Total employees	5,885	5,978	6,029
Total BME	1197	1259	1272
BME %	21.4%	21.06%	21.09%

Percentage of BME employees as reported at JCC January 2008

2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
17.86%	16.80%	18.09%

- 2.1 Compared with the report tabled to JCC in January 2008 steady progress can be seen to have been made with the percentage of BME staff employed by the Council. The gap against the percentage of BME people living in Merton as a whole populous has been narrowed. Particular progress occurred during 2008 – and this good progress should be noted by the Committee.
- 2.2 It is worth noting that 25% of the borough's total population is from a BME background, of which 66% are economically active, which is based on the 2001 Census data. Merton has made good progress in employing a workforce that is representative of the working population of the borough.
- 2.3 The total number of Asian staff employed by the Council has increased to 5.44% from 5.06% - when this was reported to JCC in October 2008. Further progress is required to reflect the make up of the local Asian population in the borough of 11% of which 64% are economically active.
- 2.4 Profile of senior management
Representation of BME of staff is lower at senior management grade despite targeted recruitment through recruitment search consultants. The recruitment data shows quite clearly that applicant rates from BME are significantly lower.

**Profile of Senior Managers
September 09**

Ethnic Origin	Number
Unknown	6
Asian	4
Black	3
Chinese	0
Mixed	0
Other	1
White	97
Total	111

Recruitment

October 08 – September 09

Ethnic category	Total No Applicants	% Applicants	Total No Shortlisted	% Shortlisted	Total No Appointments	% Total Appointments
Asian	981	14.61%	84	8.03%	11	5.42%
Black	1244	18.53%	204	19.50%	35	17.24%
Chinese or Other	127	1.89%	9	0.86%	1	0.49%
Mixed	288	4.29%	37	3.54%	2	0.99%
Unknown Ethnicity	1161	17.29%	237	22.66%	42	20.69%
White	2913	43.39%	475	45.41%	112	55.17%
	6714		1046		203	

The recruitment statistics for the last twelve months show that:

- Asian and Chinese applicants are falling out the process at the shortlist stage because they have not demonstrated how they meet the person specification
- 17% (1161) of applicants have not declared their ethnicity
- The rate of appointments within (black) applicants is consistent with numbers applying and being shortlisted
- The 'mixed' applicants are shortlisted but are unsuccessful at the interview stage. Further analysis is required to understand the issues.

3. Actions

A number of actions continue to be taken to improve the representation of BME staff in the Council as follows:

- 3.1 Merton has launched an Ambassadors' programme that seeks to engage community groups in terms of employment with the Council and to promote employment opportunities to our local communities
- 3.2 Corporate induction includes diversity awareness and community cohesion to embed diversity awareness
- 3.3 Recruitment training has been reviewed to incorporate diversity
- 3.4 The application form and the information pack have been recently reviewed and updated to ensure Merton's commitment to employ people with diverse backgrounds is promoted.
- 3.5 All adverts carry a clear statement of encouragement in support of the Council's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy as follows:

'We encourage applications irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion & faith and sexual orientation. We are particularly keen to receive applications from the Asian community which is currently under-represented at all levels within the Authority.'

- 3.6 HR continues to undertake detailed equality impact assessment arising from the ongoing headcount reduction exercise to ensure the minimisation of disproportionate impact on BME staff.
- 3.7 HR will visit other boroughs to identify new ways of attracting and retaining senior BME staff
- 3.8 The council's contracted suppliers for the recruitment of senior staff will be retendered in 2010; part of the specification will focus on the sourcing of talented BME and disabled candidates. The contractors will be measured against this criteria

- 3.9 HR will explore the possibilities of developing the existing talent within the workforce
- 3.10 HR will work in partnership with community groups by offering recruitment and interviewing skills workshops for prospective candidates.
- 4. Alternative options**
- 4.1 None for the purposes of this report
- 5. Consultation undertaken or proposed**
- 5.1 This report will be shared with the Minorities in Action Group
- 6. Timetable**
- 6.1 Embedding diversity is an ongoing programme within the Council.
- 7. Financial, resource and property implications**
- 7.1 Any costs will be met from existing budgets.
- 8. Legal and statutory implications**
- 8.1 There is general and specific duty to promote equality of opportunity on all public sector organisations.
- 9. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications**
- 9.1 Embedding the diversity programme ensures the Council addresses human rights, equalities and community cohesion in its leadership role, service delivery and employment.
- 10. Risk management and health and safety implications**
- 10.1 There is a potential risk of reputation damage by not promoting diversity and could result in a negative public and employee perception. Consequently, there could be an adverse impact on our CAA score as diversity is a key factor to the delivery of services and employment.
- 11. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:**
- 11.1 Employment profile of the Council 2007/8 to 2009/10, Appendix 1.
- 12. Background Papers – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report**
- 12.1 Employment profile 2009/10

13. **Contacts**

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Ethnicity Profile
 [All Dates] [London Borough of Merton] [All Job Tiers] [All Genders] [All Ethnic Origins] [Able and Disabled] [All Age Bands] [All Lengths of Service] [All Grades] [All Jobs] [Full-Time and Part-Time] [All Contract Types] [All Leaving Reasons] [All BVPI Permanent Flags] Avg Headcount

	CHIEF EXECUTIVES	CHILDREN SCHOOLS & FAMILIES	COMMUNITY & HOUSING	CORPORATE SERVICES	ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION	SCHOOLS	London Borough of Merton
2007/2008							
(Blank)	3	36	50	19	30	127	264
Asian	1	23	61	42	20	174	321
Black	8	105	155	55	63	172	558
Chinese	0	0	4	1	1	9	14
Mixed	4	8	15	14	10	36	87
Other	2	12	18	14	19	152	216
White	44	313	671	401	593	2,403	4,424
All Ethnic Origins	61	498	974	545	736	3,072	5,885
2008/2009							
(Blank)	3	43	53	17	41	116	272
Asian	0	25	59	42	21	184	331
Black	7	109	152	54	62	176	560
Chinese	0	0	5	1	1	9	17
Mixed	5	9	11	12	9	37	84
Other	2	10	15	14	22	204	266
White	48	342	629	395	575	2,457	4,447
All Ethnic Origins	65	539	924	534	732	3,184	5,978
2009/2010							
(Blank)	3	46	58	19	42	114	281
Asian	0	28	53	43	20	184	328
Black	7	108	153	52	63	182	565
Chinese	0	1	5	1	0	10	17
Mixed	4	10	13	11	9	40	87
Other	2	9	13	14	23	215	276
White	49	357	608	391	578	2,493	4,476
All Ethnic Origins	64	558	903	530	735	3,239	6,029