

Report to:	Cabinet	22 March 2021
Lead Member:	Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson, Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group Chair	
Lead Officer:	Head of HR and Corporate Services	

Scrutiny and Overview Committee Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group Recommendations

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise the work undertaken by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group and to present the group's recommendations to Cabinet. These recommendations were agreed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting on 25th February 2021.

Key Decision

2. No

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the following recommendations:
 - **Recommendation 1** - Key performance indicators relating to how the council responds to BAME employees at South Cambridgeshire District Council should be reported to the Employment and Staffing Committee on an ongoing basis.
 - **Recommendation 2** - The Leader of the Council should assign the responsibility for equalities to an existing Lead Cabinet Member.
 - **Recommendation 3** - The Lead Cabinet Member with responsibility for equalities should investigate the establishment of an equalities advisory panel/group.
It is suggested that this panel/group could follow the model of the Council's Brexit Advisory Group rather than requiring a formal committee to be set up. The Lead Cabinet Member should establish the most appropriate reporting route for the equality in employment report and whether this should be

reported to the equalities advisory panel/group or the Employment and Staffing Committee.

- **Recommendation 4** - The new equality advisory panel/group should track the outcomes of the equalities staff forum.
- **Recommendation 5** - The suitable Lead Cabinet Member should liaise with relevant officers on street naming in South Cambridgeshire.
- **Recommendation 6** – The Council should produce an equalities toolkit for businesses, to help broaden their understanding of race inequality in the workplace and enable them to undertake Race Equality Impact Assessment on their employment practices.

This is in line with work that has already been undertaken by Cambridge City Council. It is suggested that this toolkit should be developed by the Business Support Team. The group acknowledges that there may not currently be capacity for the team to undertake this work due to demands supporting businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic, so this work should be undertaken when capacity allows.

- **Recommendation 7** – Provision of training on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness for all councillors and officers.

As well as requiring all councillors to attend a briefing on equality and diversity, Cambridge City Council provided training on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness which was found to be beneficial. The task and finish group suggests the same training is provided for South Cambridgeshire district councillors and officers and that all should be required to attend.

- **Recommendation 8** – The Council should seek to collaborate with Cambridge City Council in its engagement with BAME community groups.

Cambridge City Council has taken steps to enhance dialogue with BAME community groups, the Council and other public sector organisations. As there is overlap between City and South Cambridgeshire community groups, it is suggested that this Council seeks to collaborate with and support the work already being done by Cambridge City Council to avoid duplication.

- **Recommendation 9** – The Council should build links with local BAME community groups.

The Council should seek to understand the concerns of BAME community groups and ensure that there is a way for them to engage with the Council on issues of importance and concern to them. This relationship should be monitored and maintained through the new equality advisory panel/group.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The recommendations have been developed by the Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group following an analysis of the information gathered from the research and evidence gathering the group has undertaken.

Details

5. Following the motion passed by Council in July 2020, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee agreed at its 16th July 2020 meeting to set up an anti-racism task and finish group to:
 - a) Review and examine the SCDC structure to ensure ethnic minorities are not disadvantaged.
 - b) Consider BAME access to housing and homelessness welfare support.
 - c) Provide input into the Council's equality policy.
 - d) Conduct an audit of street names and public monuments for which the Council is responsible and which name individuals or organisations, to review any with racism links.
6. Members of the task and finish group are:
 - Cllr Sarah Cheung Johnson (Chair)
 - Cllr Claire Daunton
 - Cllr Geoff Harvey
 - Cllr Richard Williams
7. The group was supported by the Head of HR and Corporate Services and the Scrutiny and Governance Adviser.
8. Having agreed its terms of reference, the group undertook the following work:
 - The group met with relevant South Cambridgeshire District Council officers to discuss and provide input to the development of the Council's new Equality and Diversity Policy.
 - The group met with the Head of HR and Corporate Services and a HR Business Partner to discuss the Council's recruitment processes, the recruitment of BAME staff and unconscious bias training for staff. Further training to complement the mandatory unconscious bias staff training, is being investigated by HR. At the request of the task and finish group, the Head of HR and Corporate Services reviewed the Council's online jobs portal to make it more explicit that job applications were welcomed from people of all backgrounds.
 - The group met with the Head of Housing to discuss BAME access to housing and homelessness welfare support. The task and finish group did not feel this action could be carried forward meaningfully due to the lack of

data available as the Council is dependent on tenants self-identifying and only a small number do so. This could be monitored going forwards for future potential solutions.

- The group met with Cambridge City Council's Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer to discuss the work that has been undertaken at Cambridge City Council since its Black Lives Matter motion passed in July 2020. The group was impressed by the extensive work that has been carried out by the City Council which has an equalities panel and a BAME staff group. The task and finish group notes that South Cambridgeshire District Council now has a staff equalities group and discussed with the Head of HR the possibility of setting up a BAME staff group, however acknowledges that SCDC does not have the staff numbers to sustain such a group.
- The task and finish group worked with the County Archives and Local Studies Group on an audit of street names in South Cambridgeshire. Work on this will continue with information being gathered from local history societies by the Local Studies Group. At the time of writing this report, no issues regarding street names in South Cambridgeshire had been identified. When all the information has been collated, the group will share this with parish councils.
- The group reviewed data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary in relation to the number of hate crimes in South Cambridgeshire between 2016-2020.

Options

9. Cabinet could:

- Agree the recommendations.
- Refuse to agree the recommendations.

Implications

10. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

11. The task and finish group has not costed the following, for which there are potential cost implications if the recommendations are agreed:

- There are potential cost implications regarding the setup of an Equalities Advisory Panel/Group. This would relate to any potential Special Responsibility Allowance payable to members appointed to the group/panel, and for officer resource associated with supporting this panel and administering its meetings. Costs would depend on the number of

panel members, frequency of meetings and amount of officer resource required to support the work of the panel and its meetings.

- There are potential cost implications in relation to staff resource to produce a toolkit for businesses.
- There are potential cost implications for the provision of training on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness.
- Costs are unknown for any initiatives or engagement activities.

Staffing

12. The Task and Finish Group has not estimated the staffing requirements of the recommendations should they be agreed.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

13. The implementation of the recommendations would support the Council's priority of being a modern and caring Council.

Background papers

Details of the 14th July 2020 Council meeting and relevant motion on the Council's [website](#)

Details of the 16th July 2020 Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting on the Council's [website](#)

Appendices

Appendix A: Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

Report Author:

Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson, Anti-Racism Task and Finish Group Chair

Victoria Wallace – Scrutiny and Governance Adviser